NEKOGAHARA
STRAY CAT SAMURAI
2
HIROYUKI TAKEI
CREATOR OF SHAMAN KING

Nekogahara

CHAPTER 7:
STUMPED

HIROYUKI TAKEI

CHAPTER 7: STUMPED PAGE 1

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SPECIAL MANGA IN HONOR OF THE NEKOGAHARA/ NOBUNYAGA'S AMBITION COLLABORATION PAGE 156

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...EH?
WHAT HAVE WE HERE? I THOUGHT I JUST SLICED A PRIEST.

?
JUST GOES TO SHOW...YOU CAN SEE SOME MOGS CUT IN TWO AND *STILL* NOT ASSUME THEY'RE DEAD.
SCRITCH
HUH? WHAT'S THE MATTER, BOSS?

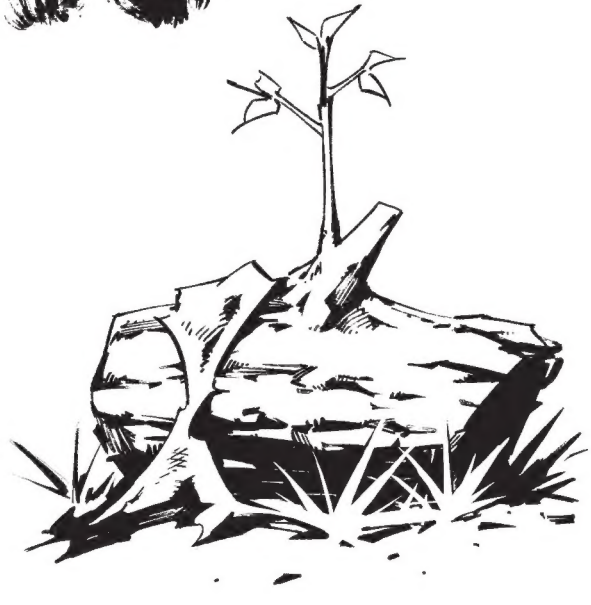
...WE'VE GOT A TROUBLE-MAKER ON OUR HANDS.
LOOKS LIKE...
MEOW
ネコ

猫ヶ原

ネコガハラ

Nekogahara

CHAPTER 7:
STUMPED



HIROYUKI
TAKEI

SOME-
THING'S
GOING
ON OVER
BY THE
GATE.
THEY'VE
ALREADY
SNIFFED ME
OUT, EH?
THAT WAS
FAST.

I BETTER
GET GOING
BEFORE
THINGS GET
ANNOYING.
ANYWAY,
THAT OLD
FOX CAN
TAKE CARE
OF
HIMSELF.

KA-CHAK

I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A WORD WITH YOU, NORACHIYO-SAN.
EXCUSE ME.

HE'S...

...LITTLE-FOLD?

WHO'S THAT? NEVER HEARD OF HIM.

NO, DON'T TELL ME. I DON'T WANT TO GET MIXED UP IN ANY CAT'S BUSINESS.

ESPECIALLY ...

MY NAME IS MUKURO.

I AM HERE BY THE ORDER OF LITTLE-FOLD, LEADER OF THE CLOWDER OF EXTRA-ORDINARY CATS.

HUH... I DIDN'T THINK CATS COULD STILL JUMP THAT HIGH AT YOUR AGE.

AND BLACK CATS SHOULDN'T STAND AROUND IN THE DARK.

YOU STARTLED ME.

...HOW THE HELL DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?

BUT SINCE YOU CAN...

...THEN MAYBE YOU REALLY ARE WORTHY TO JOIN US.

REALLY?
BUT YOU HELPED THE KITTEN AT THE TEAHOUSE.

KEH HEH HEH...
I'M A TOM WHO LIKES TO REPAY HIS DEBTS.

...IF SHE'S A SUS-PICIOUS MOLLY LIKE YOU...
...SPORT-ING A PEG-LEG THAT'S PRACTICALLY SCREAMING THAT IT HAS A SECRET.

OUT OF THE WAY, KITTEN. I'M IN A HURRY.
SO THERE YOU HAVE IT.
THUMP
...LITTLE-FOLD TOLD ME YOU'D SAY THAT.
HE ALSO TOLD ME THAT'S WHY I HAD TO TAKE THIS MISSION.
...WELL, WELL. ARE YOU GOING TO SEDUCE ME?
I HATE TO TELL YOU, BUT HEADSTRONG MOLLIES LIKE YOU AREN'T MY TYPE.
THE REASON I WAS CHOSEN FOR THIS JOB...
TWITCH
...DON'T GET ANY FUNNY IDEAS, YOU DIRTY OLD TOM.

!

JUST SO YOU KNOW, I MISSED ON PURPOSE.

HEH HEH... YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE ME BY FORCE?

YOU MUST THINK I'M AN AMATEUR.

GET IT NOW? HE SENT ME BECAUSE I HAVE THE SKILL TO HURT YOU WITHOUT KILLING YOU.

IN OTHER WORDS, AS LONG AS I'M ALIVE, I WILL NEVER LOSE.

LISTEN TO ME, KITTEN. IN BATTLE, IT'S KILL OR BE KILLED— ALWAYS.

SHIRR

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO KILL ME, THEN I WON'T BOTHER UNSHEATH-ING MY KATANA.

FWISH

...IS THAT I'M A RIDICU-LOUSLY GOOD FIGHTER !!!

SHURIKEN?

THAK THAK THAK

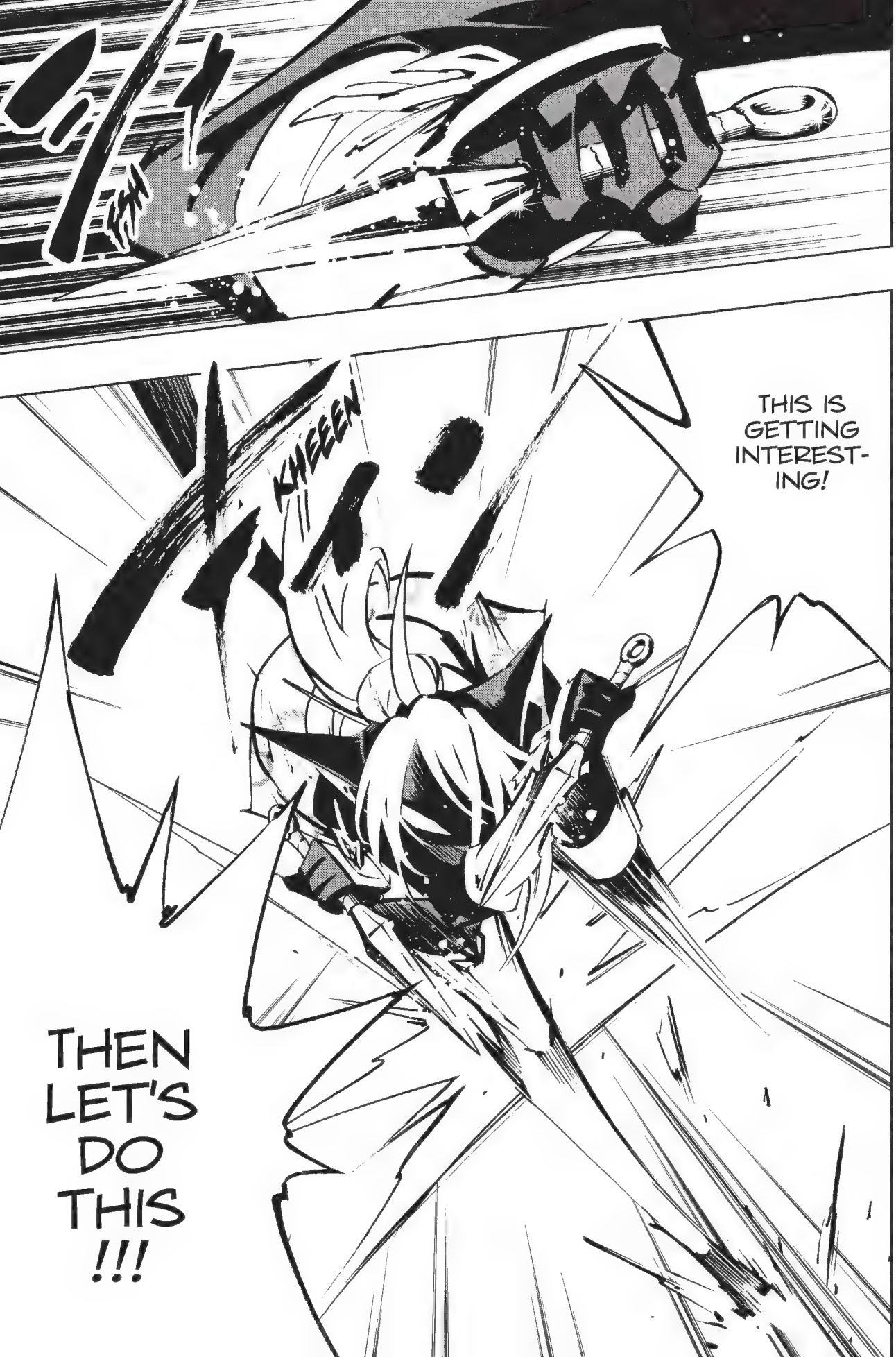
HEAD-STRONG FEMALES AREN'T MY TYPE.

BUT I DO ENJOY PINNING THEM UNDER ME.

BUT I WILL UNSHEATHE SOMETHING ELSE.

DU-DUN

YOU LITTLE-
HOW DARE YOU BARE THAT IN MY PRES-ENCE !!!


KHEEEN
THIS IS GETTING INTEREST-ING!
THEN LET'S DO THIS !!!

WHACK
YOU...!
SWISH
...YOU'VE NEVER SEEN ONE OF THESE BEFORE?
OH, COME ON. YOUR EYES ARE WANDERING.
DOES THAT MEAN...

I KNEW EXACTLY WHERE YOUR NEXT KICK WAS GOING TO LAND.
YOUR LEGS ARE AS FLEXIBLE AS A WHIP.
HNNGH!
SCRUNCH
MAKES THINGS EVEN HARDER FOR A CAT LIKE ME, WHAT WITH MY ONE EYE AND NO DEPTH PERCEPTION.
THOSE LONG LIMBS DEFINITELY GIVE YOU AN AD-VANTAGE.
WHEN YOUR ENEMY POUNCES, YOU CAN TAKE THEM OUT BEFORE THEY CAN GET INTO STRIKING RANGE.
...GASP !!!
BUT IF I'M ALREADY UP CLOSE, YOUR OPTIONS ARE SUDDENLY LIMITED.

OKA-KA-TO!!!

THAT'S RIGHT.

THAT'S WHY I LURED YOU IN CLOSE.

GHING

AND NOT WITH MY LONG SWORD OR MY *WAKIZASHI*, BUT WITH **THIS.**

BUT I DO THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE ASKED WHAT MY FALSE LEG WAS HIDING.

HA...

YOU REALLY ARE AN INFURI-ATINGLY DIRTY OLD TOM.

KA-POP

YOU STUPID FUR-BALL!!!

KA-THWACK

IF YOU KILL ME, I CAN'T BED YOU!!!

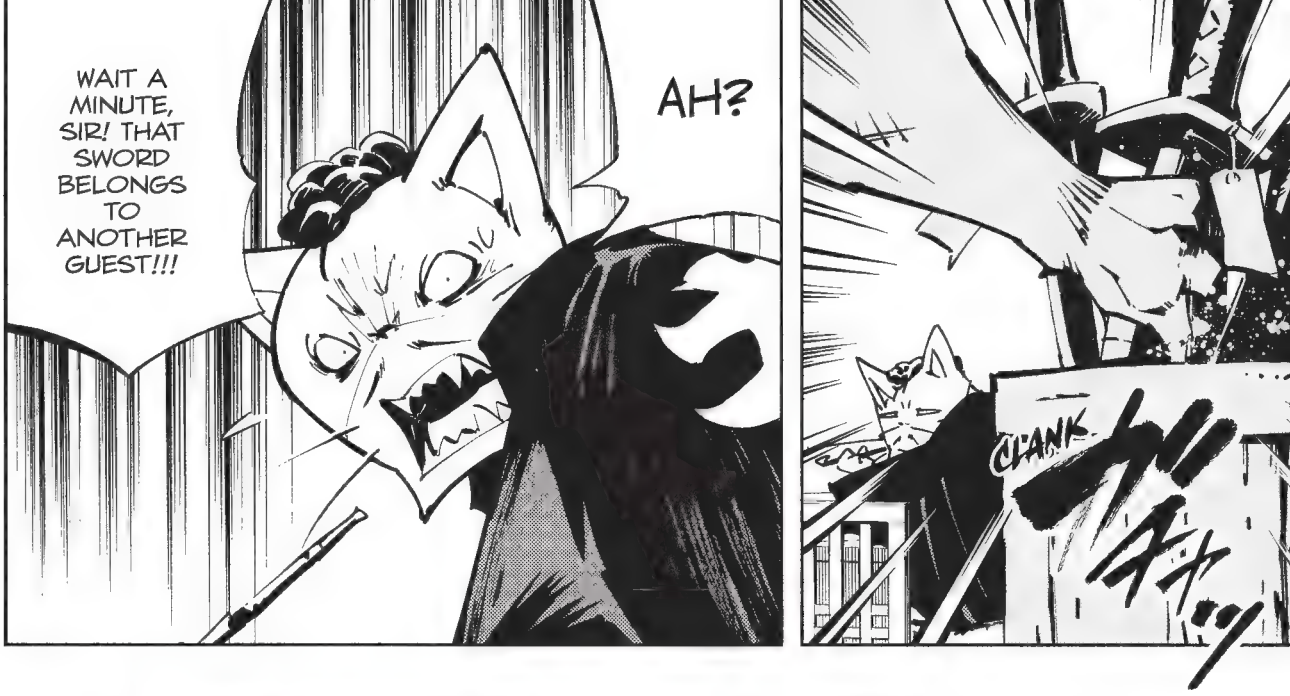
HOW...
ZZAM
BAM
HOW COULD YOU...
YOU WOULD PUNCH A MOLLY IN THE FACE?

MRRR-OOOW-WRR!
HUMP
HUMP
HUMP
NICE.
I'VE NEVER LAID A SHINOBI BEFORE.
...WHAT'S THIS? IS THAT WHAT TURNED ON THE HEAT?
STUMPED!

ネコガハラ
NEKOGAHARA

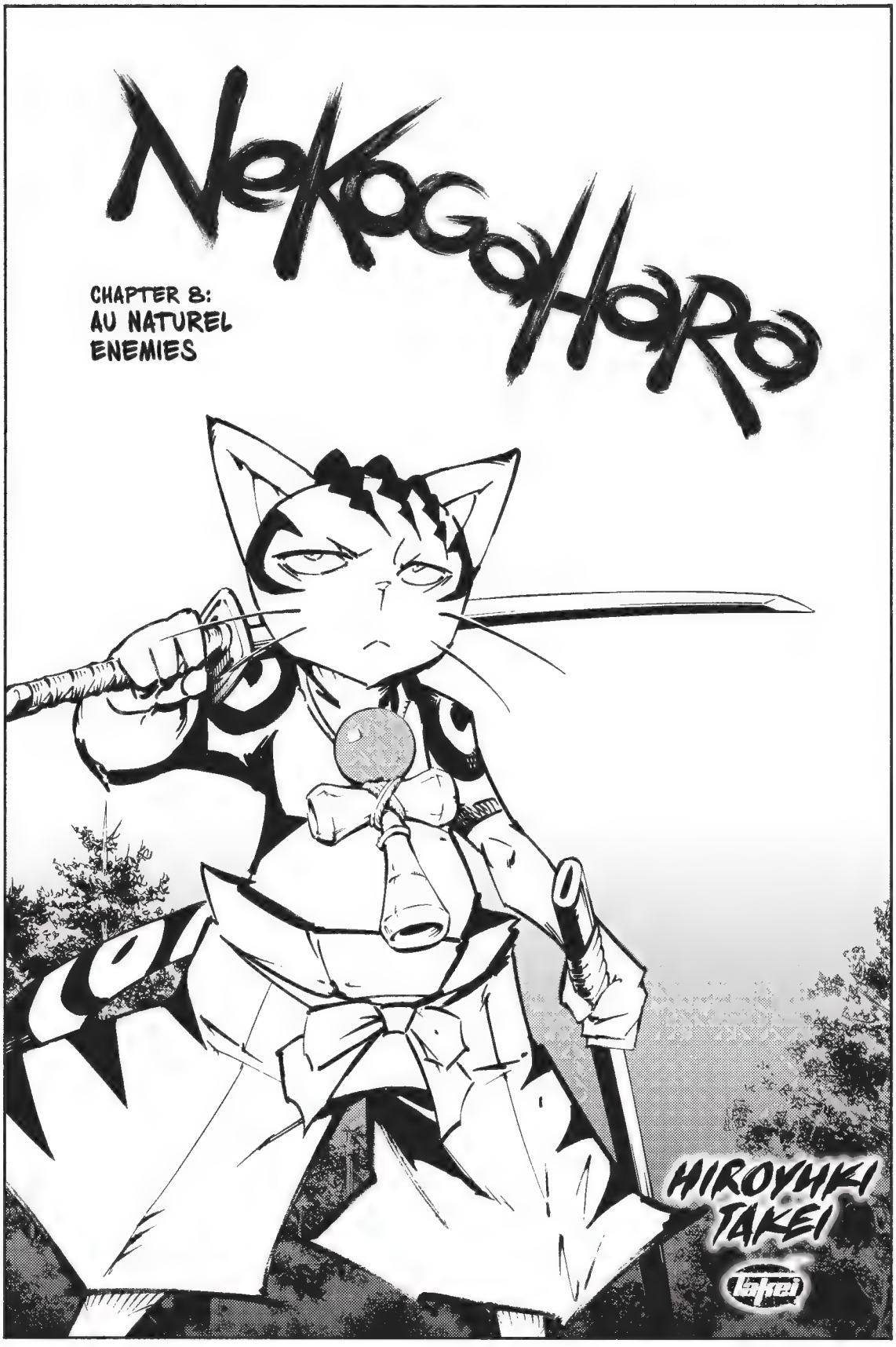
YOU'RE KIDDING...
...

HE'S STILL ALIVE?


WAIT A MINUTE, SIR! THAT SWORD BELONGS TO ANOTHER GUEST!!!
AH?
CLANK

IF THAT MOG'S STILL ALIVE...
CAN IT. PUT IT ON MY BILL FOR THIS PLACE.

...THEN IT'S MY JOB...
...TO CUT HIM DOWN !!!


NEKOGAHARA
CHAPTER 8:
AU NATUREL
ENEMIES
HIROYUKI
TAKEI

I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT HE IS THE ONE WHO SLEW YOUR SON'S COMPANIONS.

YES, YOUR LORDSHIP!

...SO HE HAS VISITED MY TOWN.

HMPH...

HIMEMASU CASTLE

...AMEMURA RICAN SHORT-NO-KAMI-DONO!

SHAKE-GAWA SHOGUN...

I HAD HIS BELL AS PROOF, BUT IT HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM ME. NEVER-THELESS,

WON'T YOU ALLOW THE HUMBLE SHISHIWAKA TO LEAD THE HUNT FOR THE WANTED CRIMINAL NORACHIYO?

...WHAT?

BUT HE PUSHED SOME-THING ELSE UP YOUR BRINK.

I HAD PUSHED HIM TO THE BRINK OF DEATH!

BUT WHY...?!

...!

THEY SWEAR TO ME THEY'LL BRING ME HIS HEAD, THEY ASK ME FOR SOLDIERS AND MONEY.

THESE TOMS LIKE YOU, THEY COME TO ME IN DROVES.

BUT AT THE SAME TIME, IT WOULD STIR UP A WHOLE NEW HORNET'S NEST.

AND, YES, IF I PUT AN END TO HIM, I WOULD GO UP IN THE WORLD.

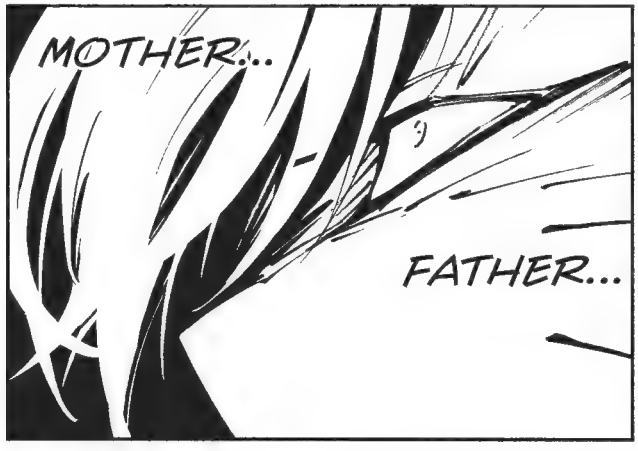
THAT I CAN-NOT DO.

BUT... BUT RICAN-DONO! WE MUSTN'T LET THAT OUTLAW ROAM FREE!
BESIDES, YOUR HONORABLE SON HAS ALREADY SET OUT TO AVENGE HIS FRIENDS!
IF I COULD AT LEAST ACT AS HIS BODY-GUARD...!

WHICH IS TO SAY...
...I LIKE THINGS JUST FINE THE WAY THEY ARE NOW.

THAT WON'T BE NECES-SARY.
KRIK

CONSIDER YOURSELF LUCKY THAT I FOUND ANY REASON TO GRANT YOU AN INTERVIEW AT ALL.
THAT FOOL SON OF MINE IS NOTHING BUT A NUISANCE. IF HE GOT HIMSELF KILLED, HE'D BE DOING ME A FAVOR.
ZOOM


MOTHER...
FATHER...

THERE ARE SOME BAD GUYS THAT YOU CHOOSE TO KEEP AROUND.

YOU JUST DON'T GET IT, DO YA?

ZH ZH

!

GHNT

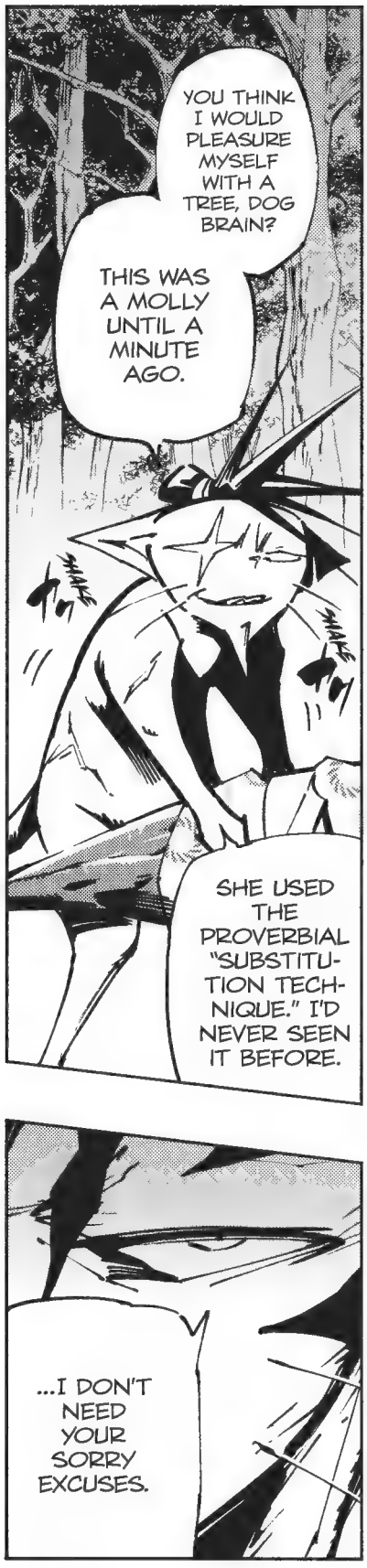
SHISHIWAKA, YOU ARE NO LONGER OUR SON.

RICAN-DONO! PLEASE, WAIT!

NO...!

I'M KURO-GANE HYŌE.
IF YOU WANT, YOU CAN GO A ROUND WITH ME, PRETTY BOY.

御用
ARE YOU KIDDING ME?
...


YOU THINK I WOULD PLEASURE MYSELF WITH A TREE, DOG BRAIN?
THIS WAS A MOLLY UNTIL A MINUTE AGO.
SHE USED THE PROVERBIAL "SUBSTITUTION TECHNIQUE." I'D NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE.
...I DON'T NEED YOUR SORRY EXCUSES.
HE'S ALIVE AND KICKING AND HUMPING A STUMP. ALREADY. HE'S GONE WAY PAST ANYTHING I COULD IMAGINE.
HE'S REALLY ALIVE.

YOU CAN BET I'M NOT GONNA TELL ANY-ONE, AND NO ONE'S CRITICIZING HERE.
DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS AND ALL THAT.
WHAT YOU USE FOR PLEASURE IS NONE OF MY BUSINESS.

I TOLD YOU, THIS IS THE WORK OF A SHINOBI.
ARE YOU LISTENING TO A WORD I'M SAYING, YOU MANGY MOG?

...TCH. COME ON. NINJAS? SERIOUSLY? YOU SOUND SO DESPERATE, IT'S CREEPY.

ARE YOU SURE...
HP...
SHH...

...YOU MAY BE ON TO SOME-THING.

QUIT MESSING WITH ME! PUT THAT DOWN AND GET SOME CLOTHES ON!

I'VE NEVER SEEN A MOLLY THAT SLIM AND WITH SUCH BIG JUGS, AND I *AM* ALMOST OUT OF THE STUFF.

WHAT DO YOU SAY? SPARE ME A TWIG?

I'M READY TO MURDER YOU RIGHT NOW!!!

I'M TIRED OF WAITING.

...MAKING YOU HALLUCIN-ATE AGAIN?

...IT'S NOT THE 'NIP...

VNN
STUMP
!!!

THAT WAS DIRTY! AND I WAITED FOR YOU AND EVERY-THING!
DOG-GONE IT!
WHACK
!

WHAM

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KILL ME, THEN STOP TALKING AND DO IT!
OR YOU'LL END UP HAVING TO FIGHT ME.
...

SMASH
GAH...! HAGH!
WAIT, DAMN YOU!
WHY AM I SO POPULAR TODAY? I'M TRYING TO CONVA-LESCE HERE.
DAMN...
FWOOSH
...
WHY ...!
WHY DON'T YOU JUST KILL ME, RIGHT HERE AND NOW!!!

LOGICALLY, I **SHOULD** KILL YOU, BUT I DIDN'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT UNTIL YOU POINTED IT OUT.
...THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION.
I GUESS, IF I HAD TO SAY IT...
...
...IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT STUPID.

THAT'S NOT A REASON! COME BACK HERE, DAMN YOU!
DOG...
...GONE IT!
I WON'T REST... UNTIL I'VE AVENGED MY TEAM!
YOU ALL THINK YOU CAN MAKE A FOOL OUT OF ME!
WHACK
MAYBE I REALLY WILL KILL Y-
YOU DON'T KNOW WHEN TO QUIT...

...RED WARRIOR...

ネコガハラ
NEKOGAHARA

DU-DUN

NOKOGAHARA

CHAPTER 9:
SHORT CAKE.
ACT ONE

...RED WARRIOR ...

HIROYUKI TAKEI

Gakkei

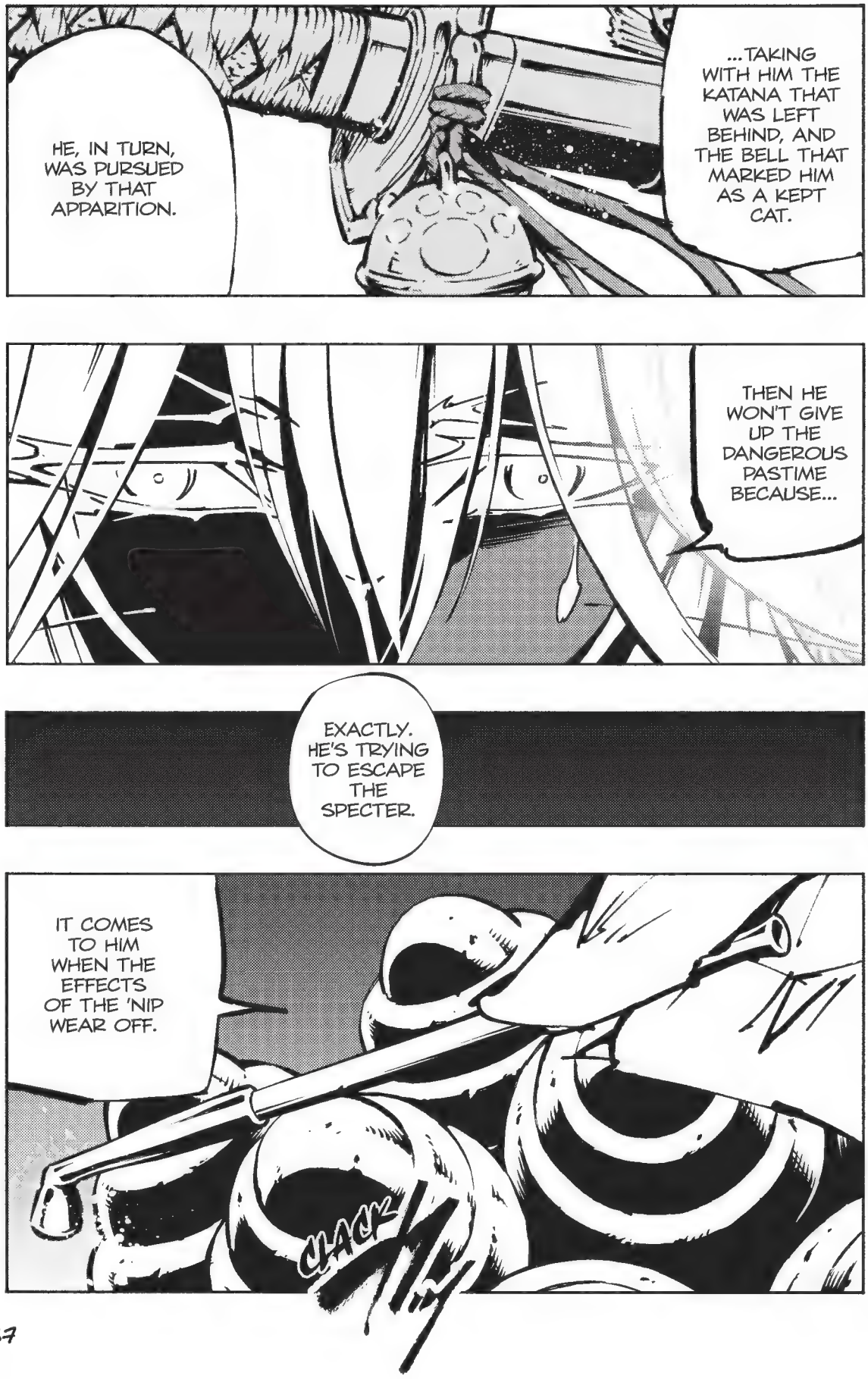
HALLUCINA-
TIONS...?
HIDEOUT OF
THE CLOWDER OF
EXTRAORDINARY CATS

YES, MUKURO.
THE FEAR OF HAVING ACCIDENTALLY KILLED A PERSON HAUNTS HIM TO THIS DAY.
NORACHIYO THE GOD-SLAYER IS PLAGUED BY NIGHTMARES.

...ACCIDEN-
TALLY?
OF
COURSE.
A CAT
COULD
NEVER KILL
A PERSON
INTENTION-
ALLY.

THAT FATEFUL DAY, HE WAS DELIRIOUSLY TRYING TO PROTECT HIS MASTER, SO HE POUNCED ON AN ATTACKER, AND FOR BETTER OR WORSE, HIS FANGS SANK INTO THAT PERSON'S THROAT.
THE PERSON TRIED TO SHAKE HIM OFF, BUT NORACHIYO WAS DESPERATE—HE LATCHED ON AND REFUSED TO LOOSEN HIS BITE.
WHEN NORACHIYO EVENTUALLY CAME TO HIS SENSES, WHAT HE SAW WAS THAT PERSON ON THE FLOOR, HIS THROAT COVERED IN BLOOD. HIS MASTER WAS NOWHERE IN SIGHT.

AND SO NORACHIYO SET OFF ON A JOURNEY IN PURSUIT OF HIS MASTER...


HE, IN TURN, WAS PURSUED BY THAT APPARITION.
...TAKING WITH HIM THE KATANA THAT WAS LEFT BEHIND, AND THE BELL THAT MARKED HIM AS A KEPT CAT.
THEN HE WON'T GIVE UP THE DANGEROUS PASTIME BECAUSE...
EXACTLY. HE'S TRYING TO ESCAPE THE SPECTER.
IT COMES TO HIM WHEN THE EFFECTS OF THE 'NIP WEAR OFF.
CHACK

THE RED WARRIOR.

...RED WARRIOR...

WHAT'S UP? FINALLY READY TO HAVE A SERIOUS CONVERSATION?

HUH?

A PERSON, DYED RED WITH BLOOD.

BA-BAH

WHY WON'T YOU JUST LEAVE ME ALONE !!!

LIKE I DID BEFORE...

...WITH MY FANGS!

...FINE. I CAN MURDER YOU WITH OR WITHOUT MY SWORD.

KA-KLING

BUT DOES THIS MOG EVER MISS?!

THAT WAS CLOSE!

DAMN IT! MY BLADE IS WEDGED IN YOUR ARMOR.

...TCH.

RELEASE

TUG

...

TUG

ネコガハラ
NEKOGAHARA

WHEEEZE
WHEEEZE
WHEEEZE
WHEEEZE

THAT SON OF A... HE CHEWED UP MY EAR!
WHEEZE
DAMN IT...
WHEEEZE
WHEEEZE
OH YEAH, I REMEMBER. HIS KATANA GOT STUCK IN THAT TREE...
GRK
GRK
...BUT I GUESS IT'S BETTER THAN FEELING THE WRATH OF HIS SWORD.

FIRST I SEE HIS FANGS, AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW, HERE I AM.
AND THAT'S WHEN IT ALL WENT TO THE LITTER BOX.
IF I'D KNOWN THIS IS HOW IT WAS GONNA PLAY OUT, I WOULD HAVE FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT THIS STUPID REVENGE IDEA.
MEOW, THIS HURTS...
ZH

OH SCAT. HERE HE COMES TO FINISH ME OFF.

NEKOGAHARA

HIROYUKI TAKEI

Takei

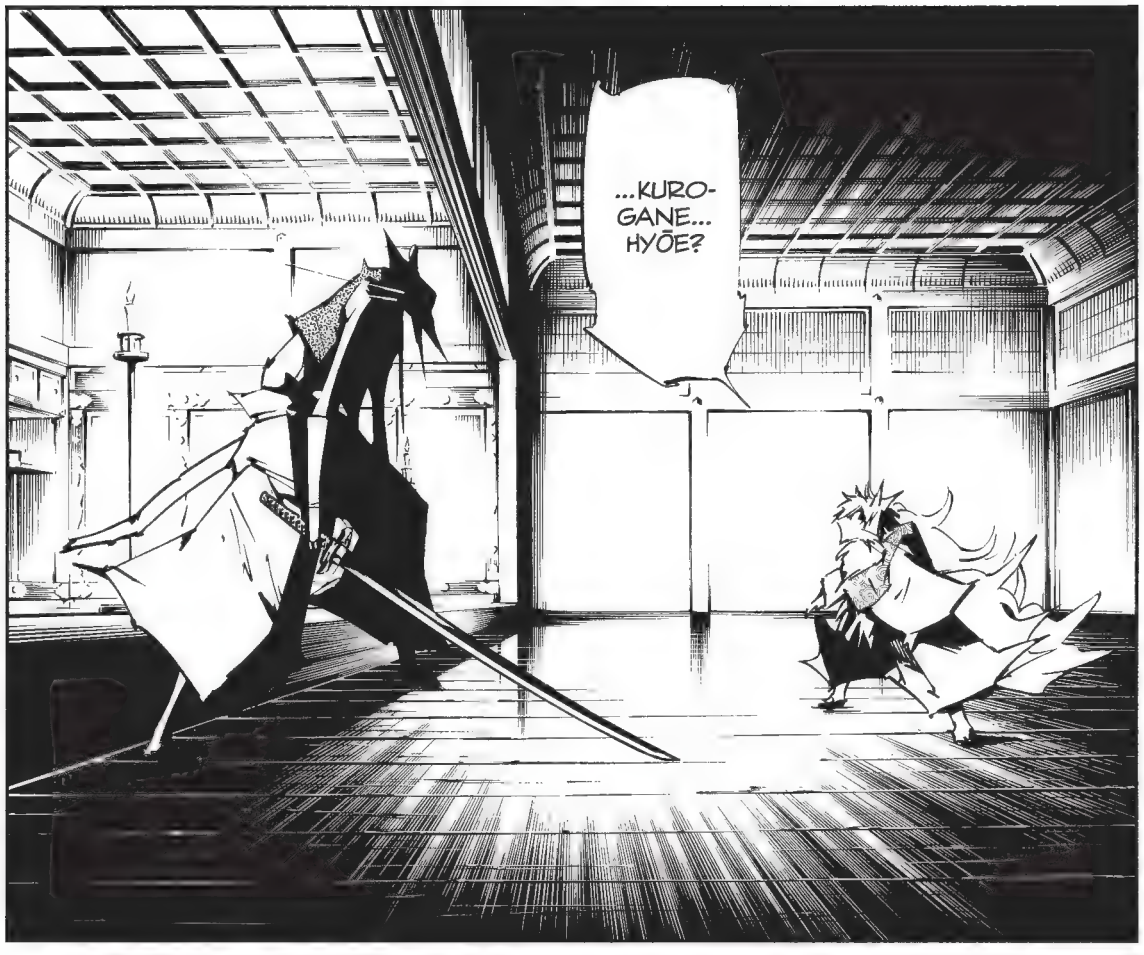
CHAPTER 10:
SHORT CAKE.
ACT TWO

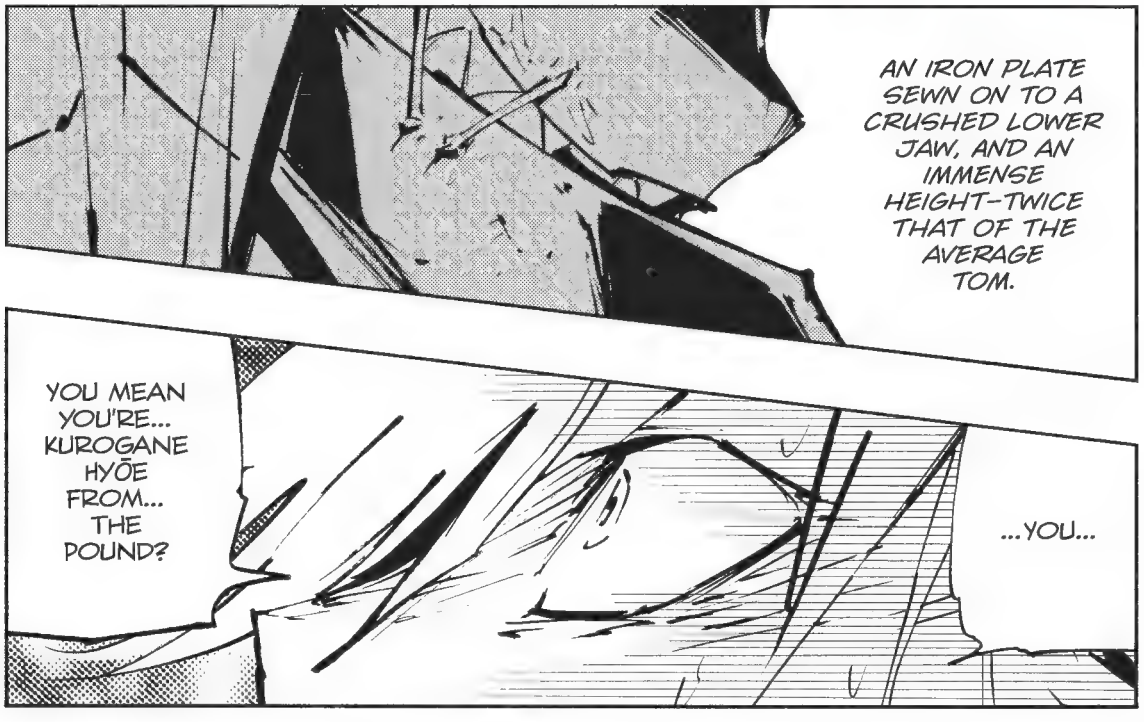
IF YOU WANT, YOU CAN GO A ROUND WITH ME, PRETTY BOY.

I'M KURO-GANE HYŌE.

YOU JUST DON'T GET IT, DO YA?

THERE ARE SOME BAD GUYS THAT YOU CHOOSE TO KEEP AROUND.


...KURO-
GANE...
HYŌE?


AN IRON PLATE SEWN ON TO A CRUSHED LOWER JAW, AND AN IMMENSE HEIGHT—TWICE THAT OF THE AVERAGE TOM.
YOU MEAN YOU'RE... KUROGANE HYŌE FROM... THE POUND?
...YOU...

...OH?
I MUST BE GETTING FAMOUS.
KRIK
IT'S THE POUND THAT'S FAMOUS.
WAIT, NO...

A PENAL COLONY FILLED YEAR-ROUND WITH TOXIC, VOLCANIC SMOKE, WHERE, TO SURVIVE, FELONS FIGHT TO THE DEATH DAY IN AND DAY OUT.

THE POUND. AN ISLAND WHERE THEY SEND THE WORST CATS– THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN CONVICTED OF THE MOST HEINOUS OF CRIMES.

IN OTHER WORDS, EXILE TO THE POUND IS A VIRTUAL DEATH SENTENCE.

IT TAKES SPECIAL POWERS FOR A CAT TO SURVIVE THERE.

WHAT'S UP, HYŌE? A GUEST?
CREAK...
...HOW CAN HE BE HERE?
BUT...
SOUNDS FUN.
LET ME PLAY WITH HIM, TOO.
TASS

SHARE WITH YOUR ISLAND-MATES, WHY DON'T YOU?
COME ON, DON'T HOG ALL THE FUN, SCAT-HOLE.
IT CAN'T BE--DID AMEMURA RICAN SHORT-NO-KAMI BRING THEM HERE?!
!...THAT'S PREPOSTER-OUS. SIX CATS, ALL SENTENCED TO THE POUND?

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING?
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT YOU WERE TOLD SPECIFICALLY NOT TO SHED BLOOD INSIDE THE CASTLE?

YEAH... THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S JUST A GAME. WE WERE PLAYING!
WHOA...WAIT A MINUTE, SHIRŌ-CHAN! WE WERE ONLY FUNNIN' HIM A LITTLE, THAT'S ALL!
NOTHING TO PUFF YOUR TAIL UP ABOUT, AMAGAMI.
...
IS THAT SO?

!
SHUDDER

WHAM

...I USED THE BACK OF MY SWORD.

WIPE UP EVERY DROP OF BLOOD FROM THE FLOOR.
AND YOU.
IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE, YOU'LL NEVER COME HERE AGAIN.

AMAGAMI SHIRŌ...

ネコガハラ
NEKOGAHARA

THE WORLD IS ROTTEN WITH TOUGH GUYS.

THERE'S PHYSICAL STRENGTH AND SKILL, OBVIOUSLY.
BUT THEIR STRENGTH COMES IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES.

CONVICTION.
SEX APPEAL.

SENSE
OF
DUTY.

CRAFTINESS.

SADNESS.

PURE EVIL.

OR TOTAL IMMUNITY TO THE PANGS OF CONSCIENCE=

AND
POWER.

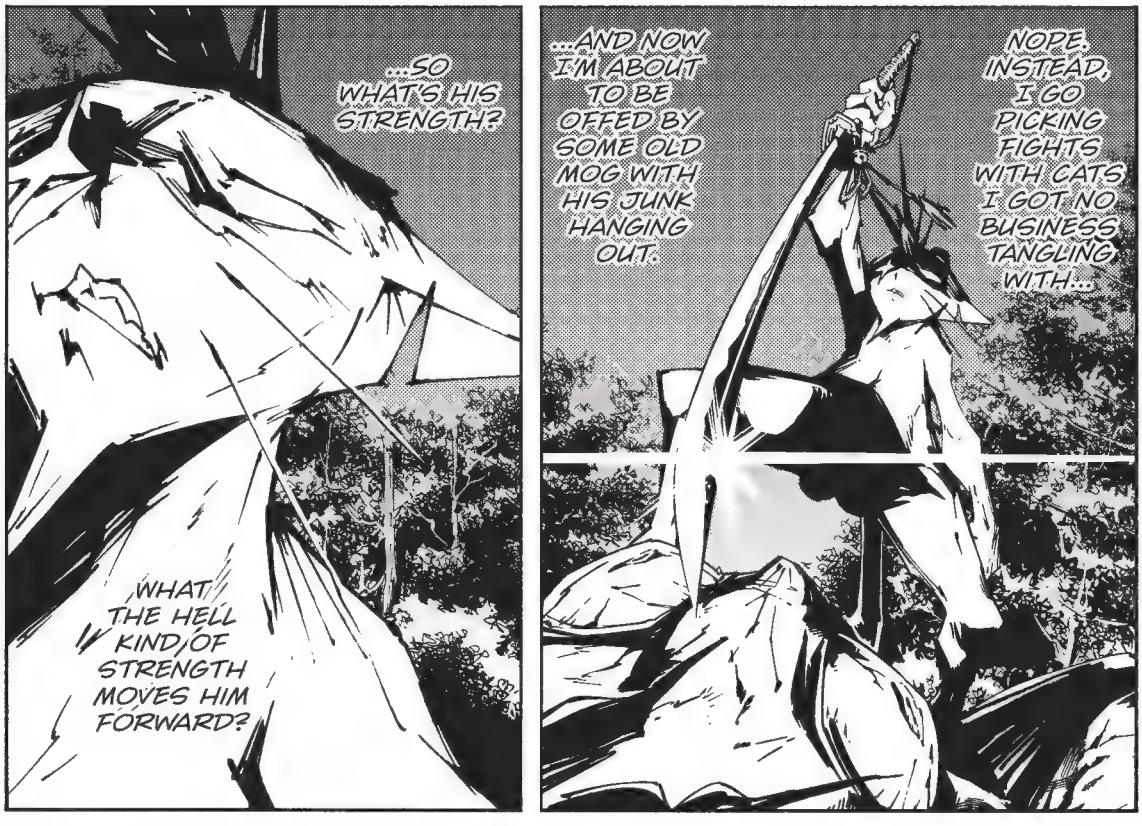
AND WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT, I AIN'T GOT EVEN ONE OF THOSE.

ネコガハラ

NekoGaHara

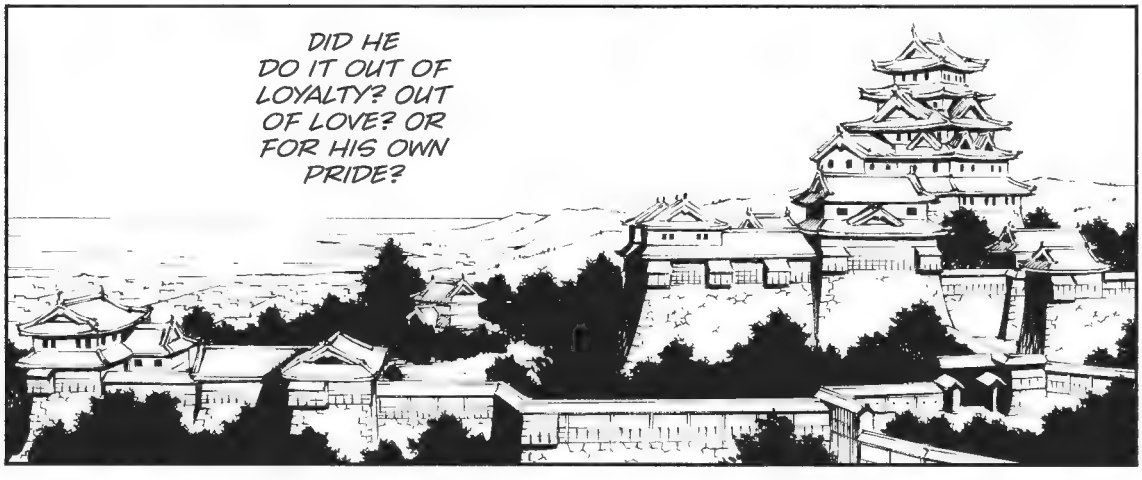
CHAPTER 10:
SHORT CAKE.
ACT THREE

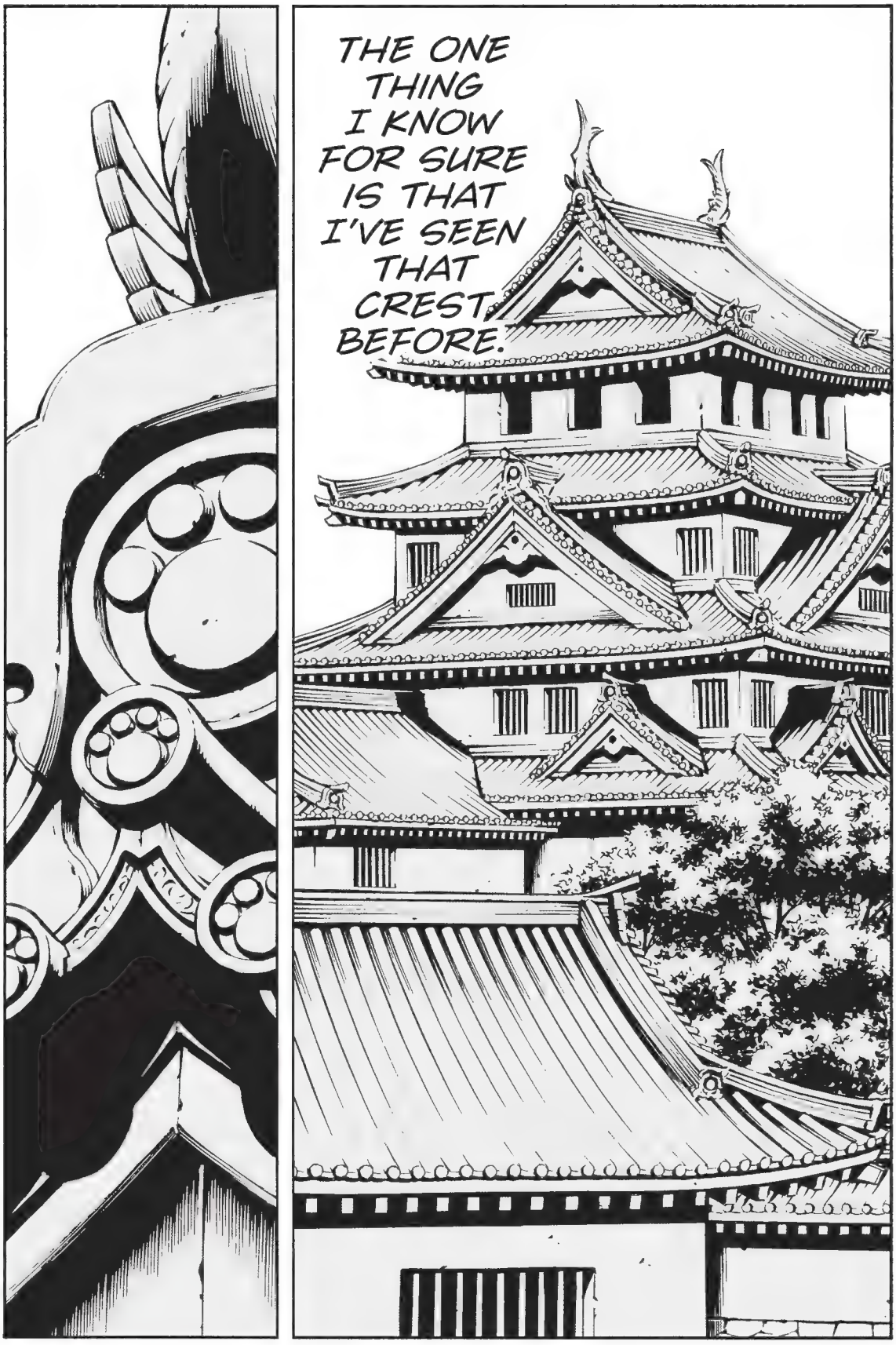
HIROYUKI TAKEI


...SO WHAT'S HIS STRENGTH?
WHAT THE HELL KIND OF STRENGTH MOVES HIM FORWARD?
...AND NOW I'M ABOUT TO BE OFFED BY SOME OLD MOG WITH HIS JUNK HANGING OUT.
NOPE. INSTEAD, I GO PICKING FIGHTS WITH CATS I GOT NO BUSINESS TANGLING WITH...

OH, IS THAT IT?
...
WHEEZE
WHEEZE
KALING
HE'S NORA-CHIYO THE GOD-SLAYER.

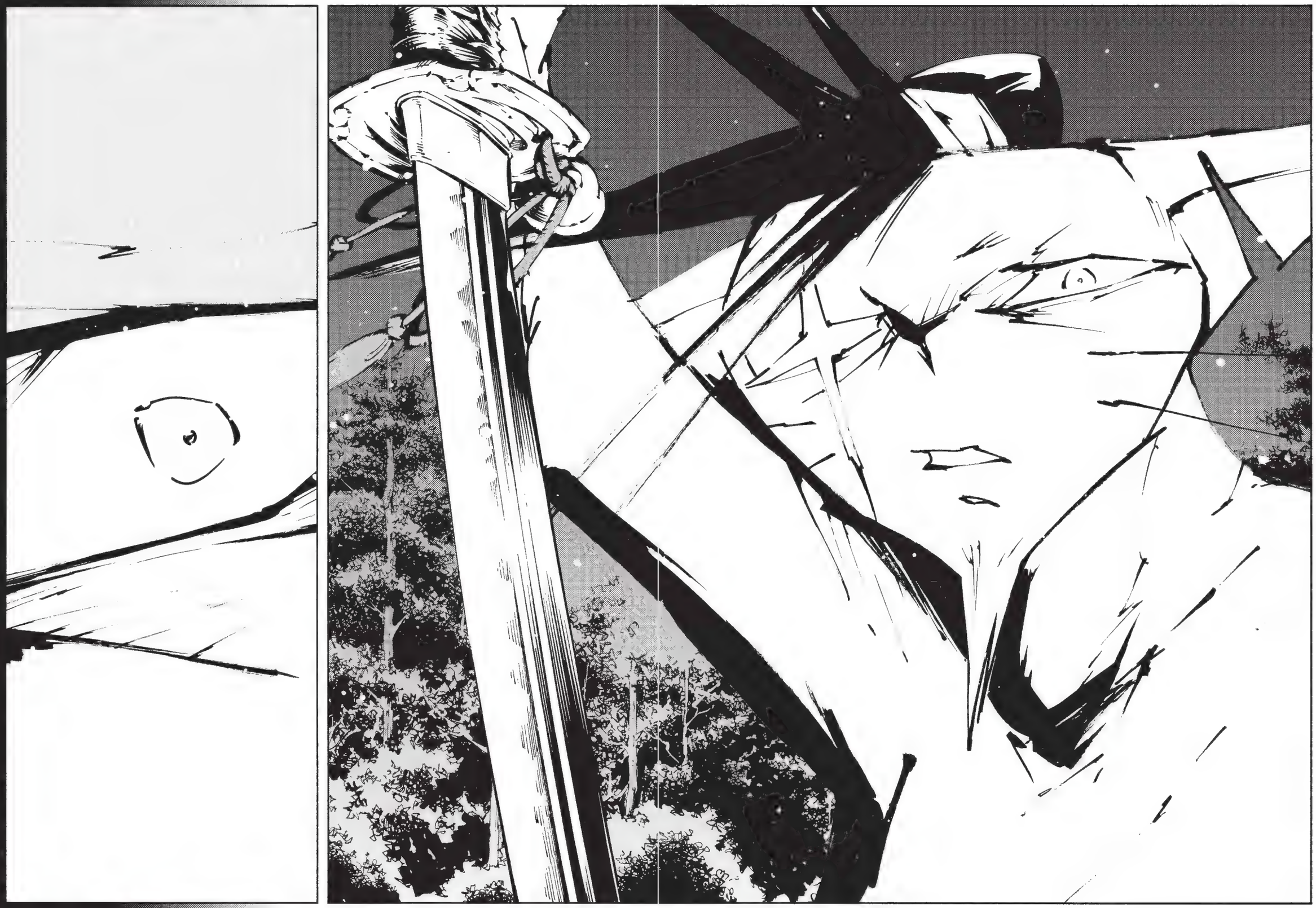
...SO HE COULD PROTECT HIS MASTER.
HE ONCE BIT AN ENEMY PERSON TO DEATH...

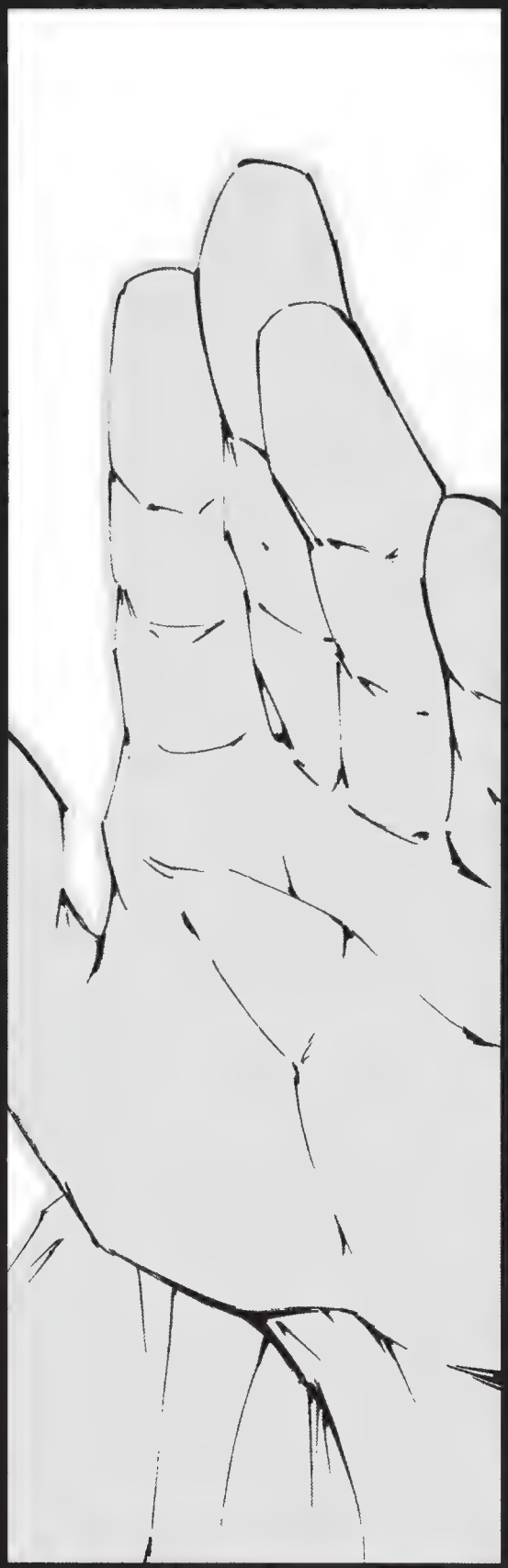

DID HE DO IT OUT OF LOYALTY? OUT OF LOVE? OR FOR HIS OWN PRIDE?


THE ONE THING I KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT I'VE SEEN THAT CREST BEFORE.

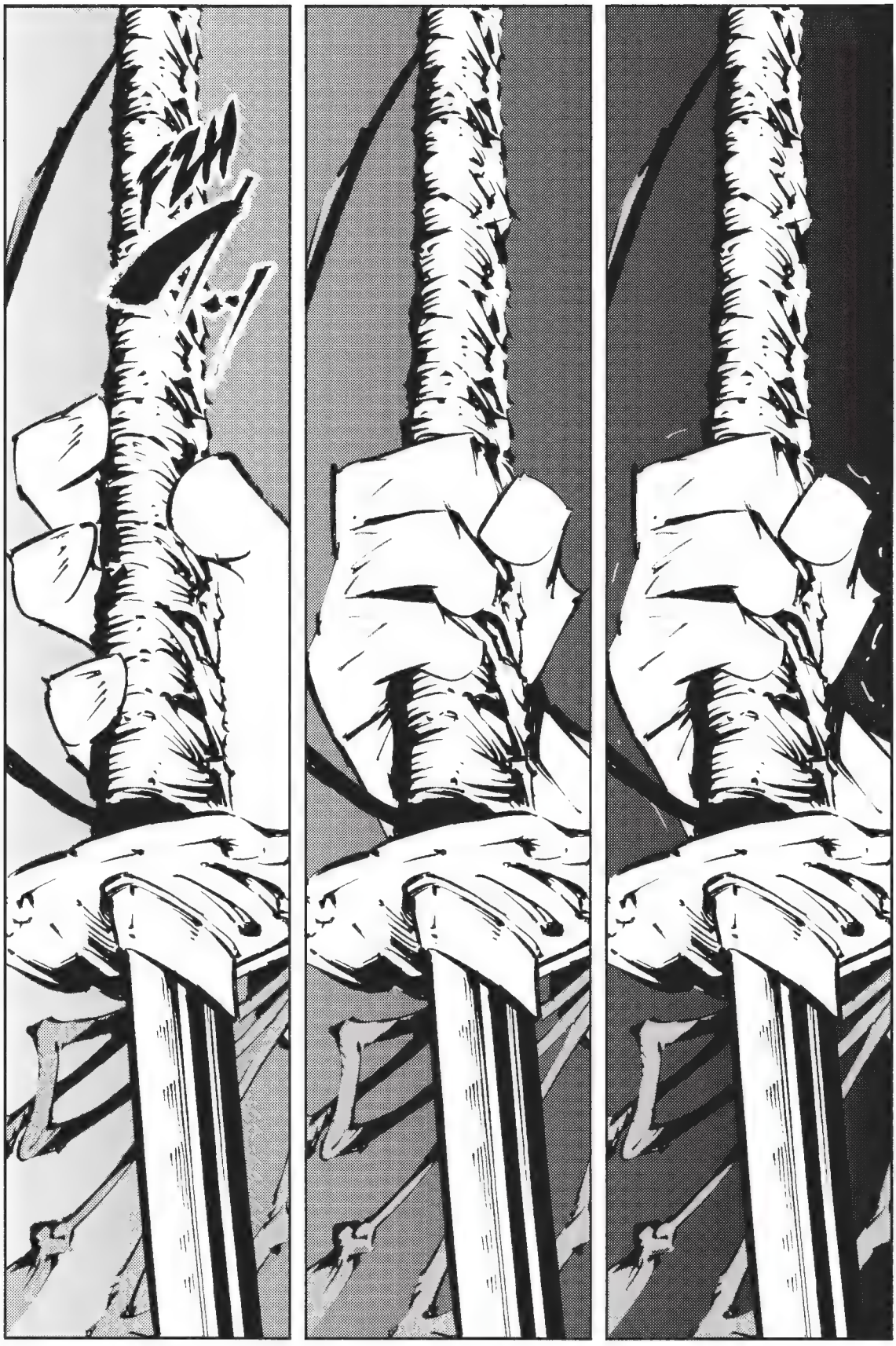
...THAT MASTER MUST HAVE BEEN ONE HELL OF GUY.

IN YOUR EYES...





...MY LORD.


FZH

HSHO
ONK

JOLT
GYE-EE-EA-AA-AR-RG-H!!!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?! IF YOU'RE GONNA OFF ME, THEN OFF ME, DOGGONE IT!
...
...?
I WAS HALLUCINAT-ING AGAIN...
TCH...

I THOUGHT YOU WERE YOUR OWN TOM...THAT YOUR FATHER'S SINS WERE NOT YOURS.
YOU'RE RIGHT. I SHOULD HAVE KILLED YOU.
RUMBLE...

THAT'S WHY I SEE THE RED WARRIOR IN YOU EVERY TIME WE MEET.
BECAUSE YOU REEK OF HIS SCENT.

IT'S YOUR SCENT.

WH... WHAT?

...MY DAD... IS YOUR ARCHNEMESIS?

NOW I REMEM-BER...

THAT CREST BELONGS TO ISHIDA! TSUNARI, THE LORD OF ŌMEOW PROVINCE CAS...

THE SCENT OF SHAKE-GAWA... AMEMURA'S KEEPER!

THE SCENT OF MY VILE ARCH-NEMESIS, THE MAN WHO DROVE OUT MY MASTER.

KA-CHAK

!
IF YOU DON'T GET OFF MY TAIL, I'M GOING TO HAVE MORE PROBLEMS THAN I NEED.
DO ME A FAVOR AND DIE. NOW.

SWOOSH
I'M TALKING TO YOU HERE!
CLAMP
HE DODGED ...?
I CAN'T BE DEAD RIGHT NOW! NOT UNTIL WE'VE TALKED THIS OUT!!!
DOG-GONE IT!

AGAIN ?
!
SWOOSH
WELL, WELL.
HE'S MORE ABLE-BODIED THAN I THOUGHT.
AND IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME PATTERN! IT'S GETTING OLD!!
HE DOESN'T EVEN THINK TWICE ABOUT SLICING MY HEAD OFF!
SON OF A...
FINE! IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, I CAN FIGHT, TOO!!!!

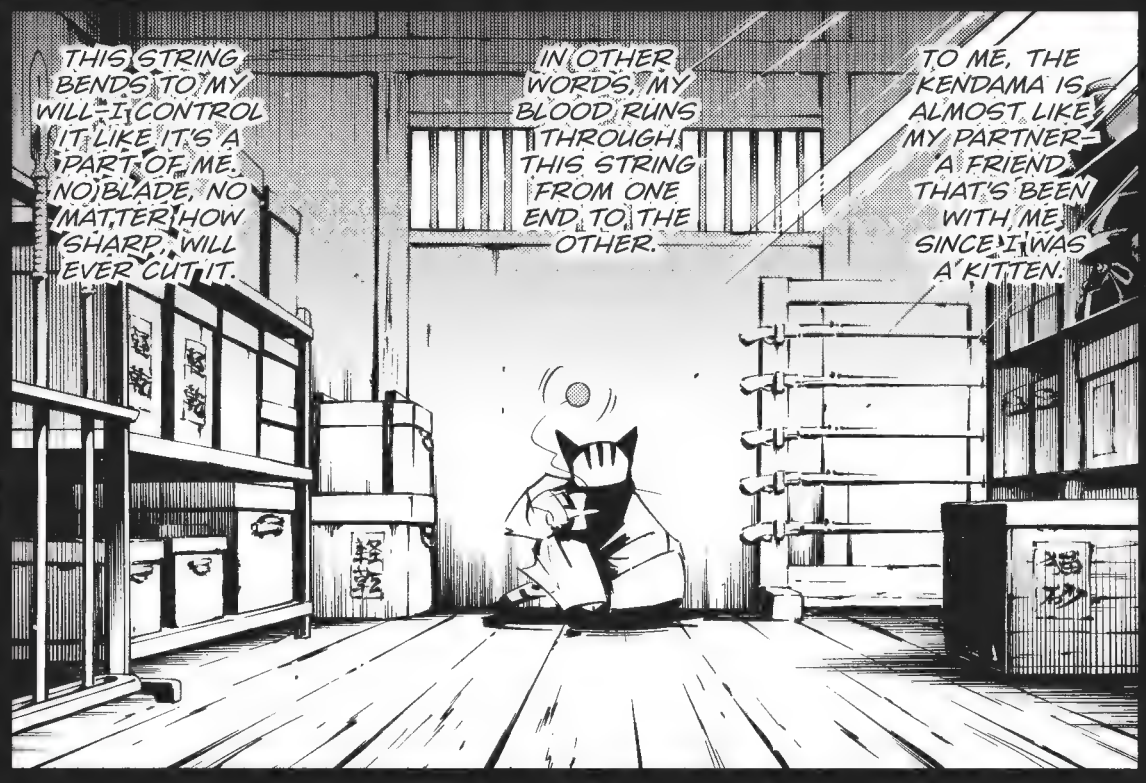
MY OWN UNIQUE WEAPON!!
WHOOSH

FIP
WITH THIS!

WHACK
...HEH.
YOU BIRD BRAIN! YOU MUST BE OUT OF YOUR MIND, BRINGING A TOY TO A LIFE OR DEATH STRUGGLE!
HEH!
THE KEN-DAMA'S STRING. IT'S–?!
YOU'LL NEVER CUT IT.

AMATEURS ARE ALWAYS LOOKING AT THE HILT AND THE BALL, BUT THOSE ARE JUST EASY TARGETS.
IT'S NOT UNTIL YOU CAN CONTROL THE STRING THAT YOU START TO MASTER THE SKILL.

THE SECRET TO THE KENDAMA ISN'T IN THE HILT OR THE BALL—IT'S IN THE STRING.
!


THIS STRING BENDS TO MY WILL—I CONTROL IT LIKE IT'S A PART OF ME. NO BLADE, NO MATTER HOW SHARP, WILL EVER CUT IT.
IN OTHER WORDS, MY BLOOD RUNS THROUGH THIS STRING FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER.
TO ME, THE KENDAMA IS ALMOST LIKE MY PARTNER—A FRIEND THAT'S BEEN WITH ME SINCE I WAS A KITTEN.
BOX: KITTY LITTER

UNTIL FINALLY IT HITS ITS MARK.
YOU DEFLECTED THE BALL... BUT THE MORE IT WRAPS AROUND YOUR SWORD, THE FASTER IT GOES.

AH?
TWANG
TWANG
TWANG
KRNG

GO!
FINISHING MOVE!! NETHER-WORLD SOUL-REAPER!
GRNK

SPRACK

KER-THUD
KA-CLACK

AND THIS... WAS MY WEAPON!
GNN
HUFF
HUFF
HOW'S THAT, DOG-GONE IT? I BEAT HIM!
I DID IT...
DID YOU SEE THAT, CATS ?!
I BEAT HIM!!! RR-RAAA-AARR!!!

-ZSH-
THUD
THEY BOTH PASSED OUT, RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THEIR CONVERSATION.
FOR CRYING OUT LOUD...
BUT I BET THEY'D MAKE A GOOD TEAM. DON'T YOU THINK, MUKURO?

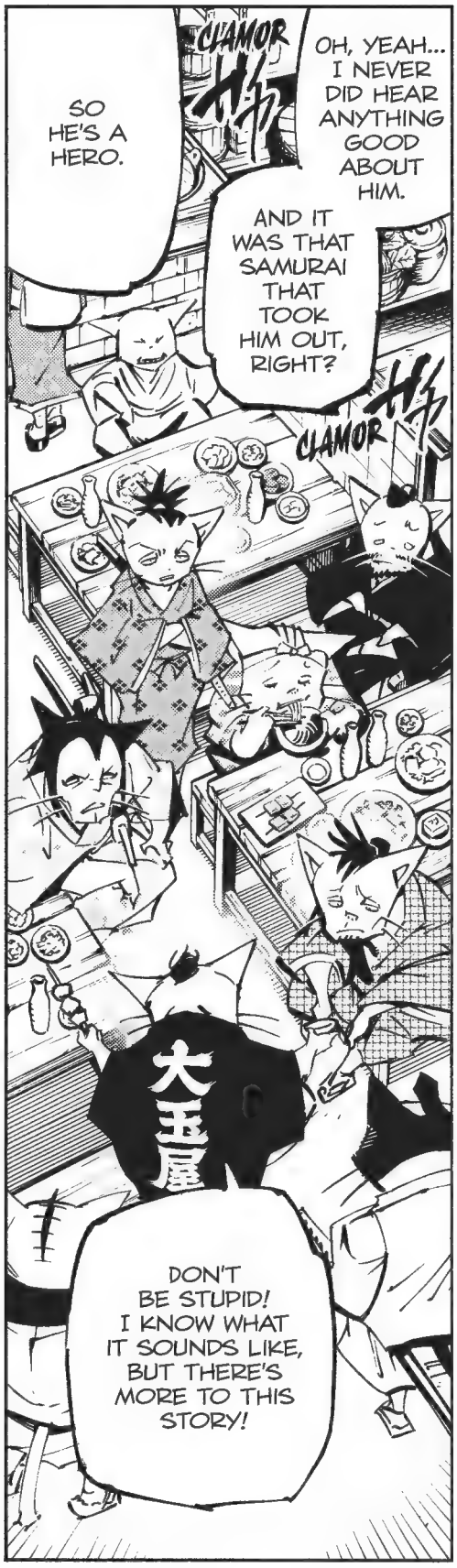
TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 3...

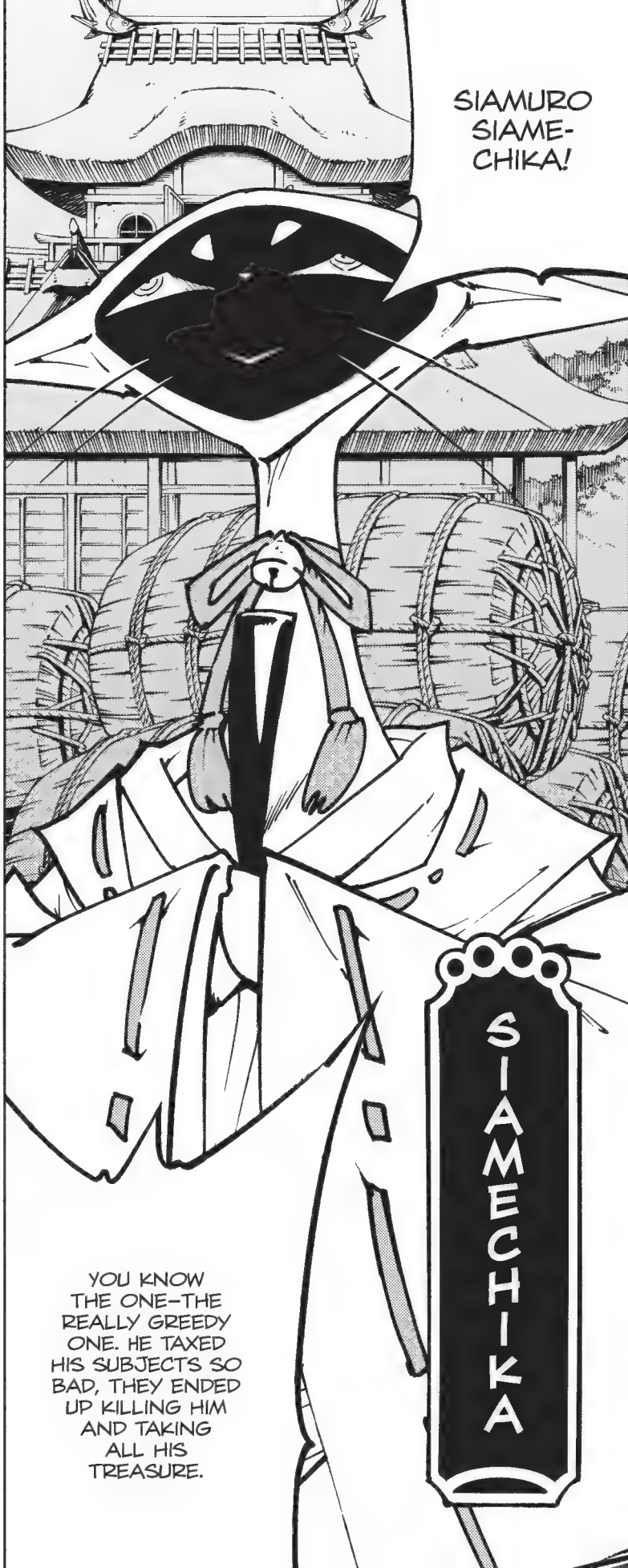
ネコガハラ
NEKOGAHARA

ネコガハラ
Nekogaharo
EXTRA CHAPTER!
BEARING TROUBLE
AWAY BY BEARING
TALES
HIROYUKI TAKEI
Takei

ネコガハラ
NEKOGAHARA

I'M TELLING YOU, MY LIFE IS THE PITS!
CLAMOR
CLAMOR
NO, I MEAN ...
ANYWAY, IT'S THAT WACKJOB SAMURAI.
JACKET: ŌTAMAYA
DO YOU CATS KNOW ABOUT THE LANDLORD WHO OWNED THE VILLAGE ON THE RIDGE?
HIS NAME WAS... WHAT WAS IT AGAIN?

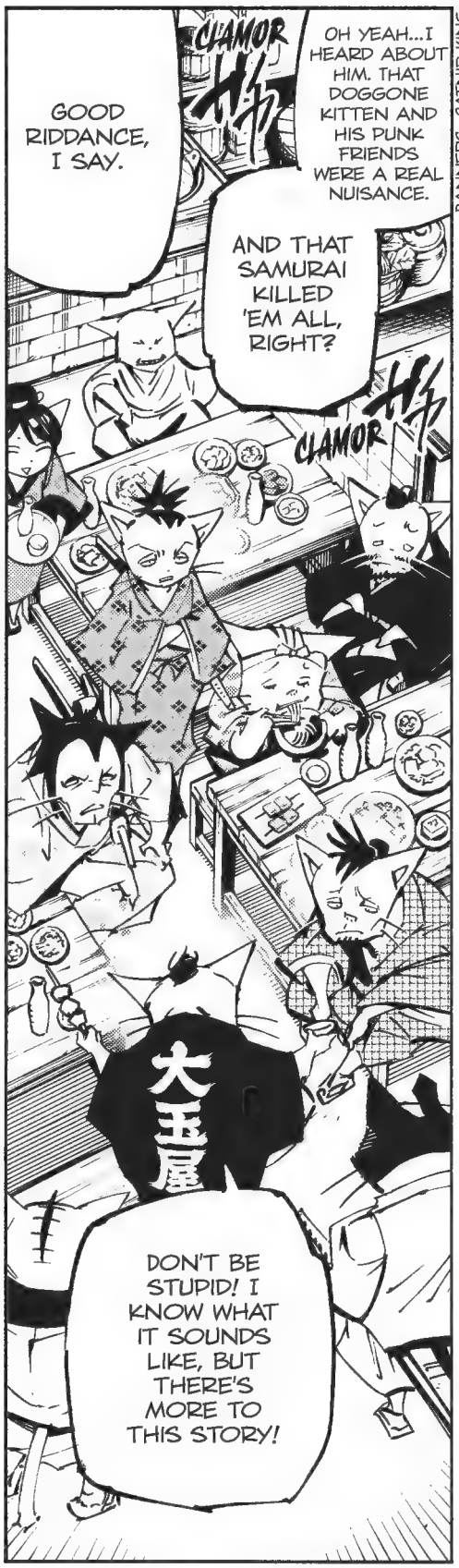

SO HE'S A HERO.
CLAMOR
OH, YEAH... I NEVER DID HEAR ANYTHING GOOD ABOUT HIM.
AND IT WAS THAT SAMURAI THAT TOOK HIM OUT, RIGHT?
CLAMOR
大玉屋
DON'T BE STUPID! I KNOW WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE, BUT THERE'S MORE TO THIS STORY!


SIAMURO SIAME-CHIKA!
SIAMECHIKA
YOU KNOW THE ONE—THE REALLY GREEDY ONE. HE TAXED HIS SUBJECTS SO BAD, THEY ENDED UP KILLING HIM AND TAKING ALL HIS TREASURE.

WHEN THE VILLAGERS TRIED TO LEAVE THE MANSION WITH THE LANDLORD'S TREASURE, THAT SAMURAI KILLED THEM, TOO!
WHACK
BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

AND THAT'S NOT ALL.
HELL IF I KNOW. HE PROBABLY WANTED TO KEEP THE TREASURE FOR HIM-SELF.
HAVE YOU CATS HEARD ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED AT THE PORT TOWN?

SON OF A–! WHY WOULD HE DO THAT?
INNOCENT VILLAGERS WHO DID NOTHING WRONG?!
WHA ?!


CLAMOR
OH YEAH...I HEARD ABOUT HIM. THAT DOGGONE KITTEN AND HIS PUNK FRIENDS WERE A REAL NUISANCE.
GOOD RIDDANCE, I SAY.
AND THAT SAMURAI KILLED 'EM ALL, RIGHT?
CLAMOR
大玉屋
DON'T BE STUPID! I KNOW WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE, BUT THERE'S MORE TO THIS STORY!

BANNERS: CATNIP KING

AMEMURA SHORT!

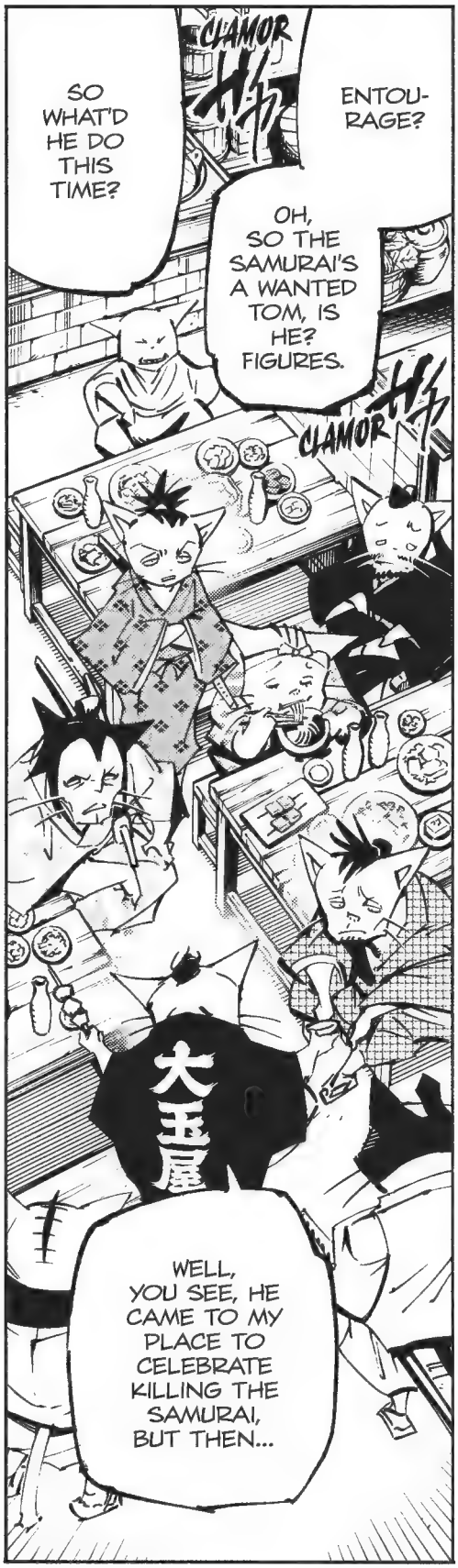
SHORT

AMEMURA RICAN'S DEADBEAT SON– THE MOG WHO WENT AROUND WITH HIS GANG OF HOODLUMS DEALING 'NIP!

THE SAMURAI WAS ONLY IN TOWN TO BEGIN WITH TO BUY HIS OWN DANGEROUS PASTIME, AND WHEN THOSE CATLINGS HAPPENED TO TANGLE WITH THE WRONG TOM, HE KILLED 'EM AND TOOK ALL THEIR 'NIP!
BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

THIS HAPPENED TO A GUEST AT MY ESTABLISH-MENT, SO I CAN'T GO AROUND SAY-ING IT TOO LOUD, BUT...
THERE'S MORE.
SIP
HIS NAME WAS... WHAT WAS IT AGAIN?
大五

IN THAT CASE, I GUESS I DO FEEL SORRY FOR THE LITTLE KITTENS.
SO HE'S A THIEF AND A JUNKIE?!
WHAAA ?!!!
...


CLAMOR
SO WHAT'D HE DO THIS TIME?
ENTOU-RAGE?
OH, SO THE SAMURAI'S A WANTED TOM, IS HE? FIGURES.
CLAMOR
大玉屋
WELL, YOU SEE, HE CAME TO MY PLACE TO CELEBRATE KILLING THE SAMURAI, BUT THEN...

FAN: CUT HIM DOWN! FAN: SHISHIWAKA-SAMA

NORWE SHISHI-WAKA!!
SHISHIWAKA
THAT SELF-PROCLAIMED "BEAUTIFUL SWORDSFELINE" WHO'S GOING AROUND THE COUNTRY WITH HIS ENTOURAGE, TRYING TO MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF AS A BOUNTY HUNTER!

THAT SAMURAI HID IN THE KITTY LITTER AND RAMMED A HOOK UP HIS ASS!!!
すな
BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

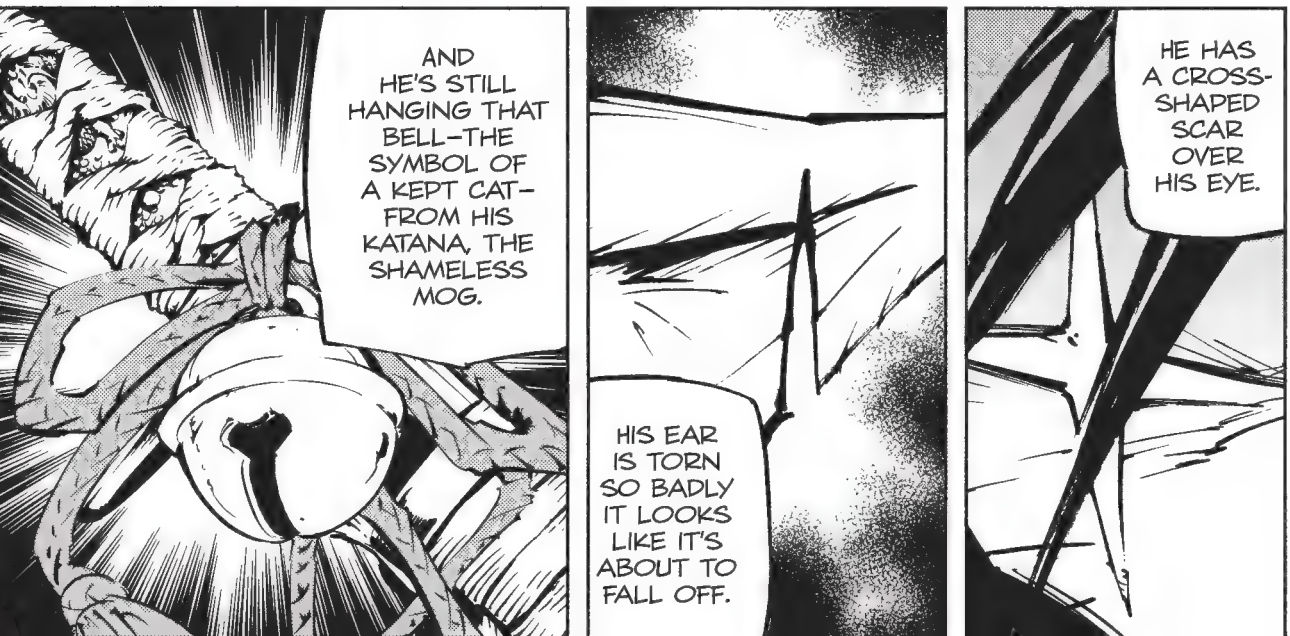
AND HE WAS BARELY ALIVE AFTER TAKING A SWORD TO THE BACK. HE COULDN'T FIGHT IN ANY OTHER WAY.
WELL, THE "BEAUTIFUL SWORDS-FELINE" HAD TAKEN HIS KATANA.
OF COURSE, I ONLY HEARD ALL THAT FROM THE CAT WHO CAME TO OUR PLACE TO INVESTIGATE THIS MOG.

BUT WHO WANTS REVENGE SO BAD THAT THEY'D HIDE IN THE PRIVY AT A BROTHEL?
WHAAA ?!!!
FIRST HE'S A JUNKIE AND NOW HE'S A PERVERTED FREAK?
...

御用
御用
御用
SHIRIYA ABYHEI.
ABYHEI
A MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL SECRET POLICE FORCE, STRAIGHT FROM THE GOVERNMENT!! HE'S BEEN AFTER THIS SAMURAI FOR YEARS!
ACCORDING TO HIM, THE SAMURAI'S NAME IS NORA-CHIYO.
A CERTAIN PERSON TOOK HIM IN WHEN HE WAS A KITTEN.
THEY GOT SEPARATED IN THE WAR, SO EVEN THOUGH HE'S GETTING ON IN YEARS, THE MOG'S STILL GOT HIS CHILDHOOD NAME.

STILL, THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE CAN LET WIDDLE NORACHIYO-CHAN OFF THE HOOK! AM I RIGHT?!
GYA
HA HA! SO HE'S JUST MOPING AROUND BECAUSE HIS BE-LOVED PERSON ABANDONED HIM!
HA
HA
HA
AN OLD MOG, GOING BY NORACHIYO!
GYA HA HA HA! WHAT A LOSER!
BAM
CLAP
NORA...
...CHIYO?

MYA
HA
HA
HEY, FOREMAN! DON'T YOU HAVE A WANTED POSTER?!
N...NO, BUT I SAW HIM WITH MY OWN EYES– I REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE.
YEAH! YEAH!
DAMN RIGHT! HE'S A MENACE TO SOCIETY! WE HAVE TO TAKE OUT THE TRASH!
IF I EVER SEE HIM, I'LL DO EVERYBODY A FAVOR AND KILL HIM!


AND HE'S STILL HANGING THAT BELL–THE SYMBOL OF A KEPT CAT– FROM HIS KATANA, THE SHAMELESS MOG.
HIS EAR IS TORN SO BADLY IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO FALL OFF.
HE HAS A CROSS-SHAPED SCAR OVER HIS EYE.

RUSTLE
AND MORE THAN ANYTHING, HE STINKS TO HIGH HEAVEN. ANYONE WOULD KNOW HIM THE MINUTE THEY SAW...
EX-CUSE ME.
大玉屋
大玉屋

WHAT?

ガシャ
ドガッ

HUH?
I WAS SURE HE JUST CUT US ALL DOWN...
I SEE. SO THIS IS THE OVER-POWERING PRESENCE OF A MASTER.
UH...
HUH...?
...!!!
?

NO WONDER EVERYONE GOT SO QUIET WHEN I WALKED IN.

OH. I DON'T THINK I'VE HAD A BATH SINCE I WENT BURROWING IN THE KITTY LITTER.

SORRY TO HAVE BOTH-ERED YOU.
MAYBE I SHOULD...
...TAKE A BATH ONCE IN A WHILE!!!

ネコガハラ
Nekogahara

SPECIAL
MANGA
IN HONOR
OF THE
NEKOGAHARA/
NOBUNYAGA'S
AMBITION
COLLABORATION

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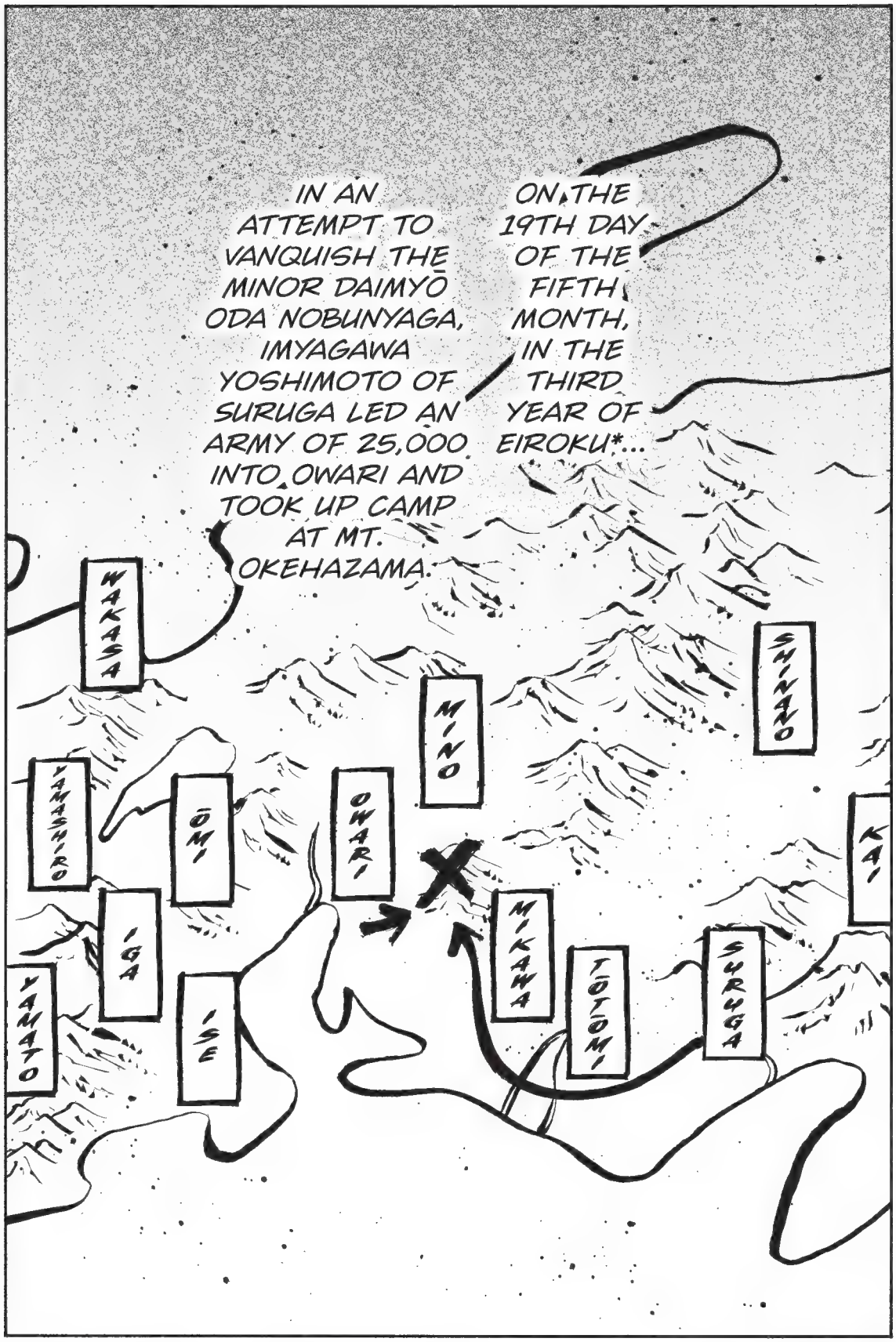

ON THE 19TH DAY OF THE FIFTH MONTH, IN THE THIRD YEAR OF EIROKU*...
IN AN ATTEMPT TO VANQUISH THE MINOR DAIMYŌ ODA NOBUNYAGA, IMYAGAWA YOSHIMOTO OF SURUGA LED AN ARMY OF 25,000 INTO OWARI AND TOOK UP CAMP AT MT. OKEHAZAMA.
WAKASA
MINO
SHINANO
YAMASHIRO
ŌMI
OWARI
KAI
IGA
MIKAWA
TŌTŌMI
SURUGA
YAMATO
ISE

*JUNE 12, 1560

THIS EVENT WOULD COME TO BE KNOWN AS THE BATTLE OF OKEHAZAMA.

NEVER-THELESS, AGAINST ALL ODDS, THE ODA ARMY WENT FORTH, THROUGH TORRENTIAL RAIN, TO IMYAGAWA'S MAIN CAMP AT MT. OKEHAZAMA.

HAVING SUFFERED DEFEAT UPON DEFEAT, ODA'S ARMY COULD LEAVE ONLY A FEW HUNDRED SOLDIERS AT THE WESTERN FRONT BY MARUNE FORTRESS...

ODA HAD AN ARMY OF A MERE 4,000 WITH WHICH TO MEET HIM.

ZSHHHH
...TALK ABOUT PAW-FUL LUCK.
I ABANDONED MY FIELDS TO COME HERE— BECAUSE I WANTED TO GO UP IN THE WORLD!
AND NOW HERE I AM, MARCHING THROUGH THE POURING RAIN AFTER A FORCE THAT'S ALREADY LOST.
A SUCCESS STORY IN THE MAKING, FOOT SOLDIER
KINOSHITA TOKITTYRO
...ME-YOW, WHAT IS HIS LORDSHIP THINKING?
AND HE WANTS US TO GO AFTER IMYAGAWA YOSHIMOTO WITH THIS MEW-SIRABLE EXCUSE FOR AN ARMY?!

...ODA NOBU-NYAGA!!
YOU'RE A DOG-GONE FOOL...
HMPH... LOSING THIS BATTLE IS NOT PART OF MY DESTINY.
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
ME?! NO, MY LORDSHIP, FEAR IS THE FUR-THEST THING FROM MY MIND!
I WAS ONLY...!
JOLT
HUH ?!
HOW DID HE KNOW ?!
...YOU THERE. ARE YOU... AFRAID?

KA-CRACK

I, ODA NOBU-NYAGA...

...WILL CREATE ONE REALM UNDER ONE CAT.

ODA NOBUNYAGA'S AMBITION

HIROYUKI TAKEI

ZSHHH
...OH, WHAT A BORE.
...

I CAME ALL THIS WAY TO CRUSH THAT TOM, BUT WE CAN'T DO A THING IN THIS RAIN.
THE BLACK-TOOTHED DAIMYŌ
IMYAGAWA YOSHIMOTO

IF YOU ASK ME, THIS RAIN...
...IS A FAR MORE FORMIDABLE FOE THAN THE FOOL OF OWARI.

I HAVE NEWS!
ZSH

THOSE MOGS WERE A BUNCH OF PUSH-OVERS!
MEOW HA HA
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN!

YOU ARE AFRAID THAT THE FOOL IS AMONG THEIR RANKS.
HO HO!
RR-REALLY.
THE ENEMY HAS ONLY A FEW HUNDRED SOLDIERS, BUT I'M AFRAID THAT-!
OUR TROOPS HAVE FAILED TO RETURN FROM THE WESTERN FRONT!
I WILL TEACH THE FOOL OF OWARI THAT HE IS POWERLESS BEFORE ME!!!
VERY WELL! THEN SEND IN ALL THE REINFORCE-MENTS!
YES, MY LORD!
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP

ZSHHH
...HMPH.
I FINALLY HAVE YOU ALL TO MYSELF.
!
P...
PURR-DON?

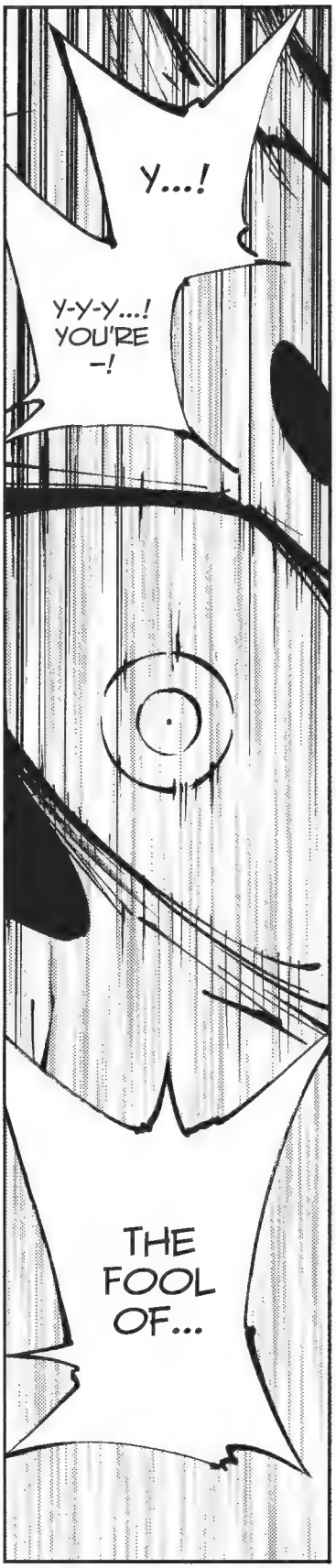
RIP

FWOOSH

I KNEW THIS TORRENT WOULD MASK OUR APPROACH.

NOW IS THE MOMENT OF TRUTH. PAY NO HEED TO THE OTHER SOLDIERS.
WE ARE AFTER ONE TOM-
IMYA-GAWA YOSHI-MOTO, AND HIM ALONE.

SLASH


Y...!
Y-Y-Y...! YOU'RE -!
THE FOOL OF...

...RREALLY DEFEATED THE FAMOUS IMYAGAWA YOSHI-MOTO!!!

BO-BOOM

OUR LORD-SHIP...

...

I DON'T BE-LIEVE IT!

I...

IN THE WARRING STATES ERA, WARLORD FOUGHT WARLORD FOR SUPREMACY. THE FELINE COMMANDERS SHED EACH OTHER'S BLOOD IN THEIR CLIMB TO THE TOP.

IN THE END, THE ONE TO GAIN THE ENTIRE NATION WOULD BE...

ODA NOBUNYAGA'S AMBITION

THIS— *THIS*— IS NOBU-NYAGA'S AMBITION !!!

I WILL CREATE ONE REALM UNDER ONE CAT!

TRANSLATION NOTES

Wakizashi, page 22

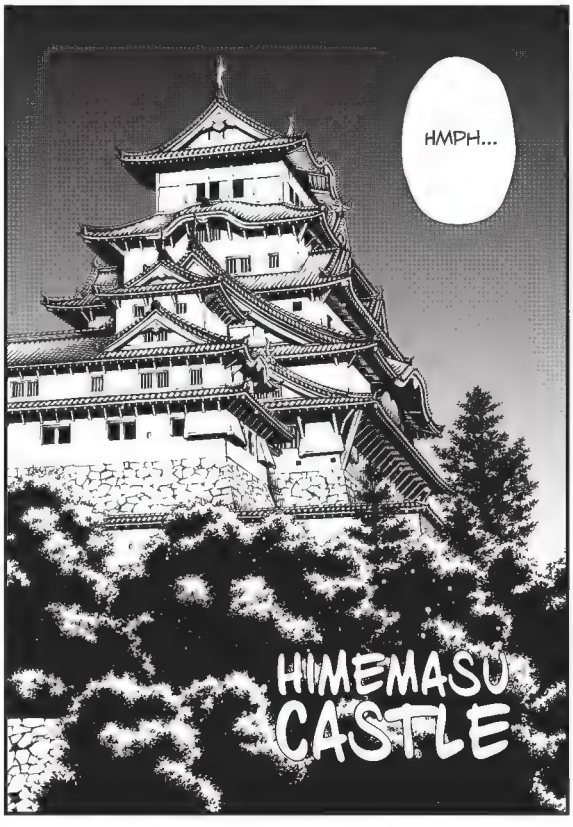
Meaning "side insert," a *wakizashi* is a sword worn at a warrior's side along with his longer katana as a symbol of his samurai status. This blade can be used as a backup sword, or for closer combat.

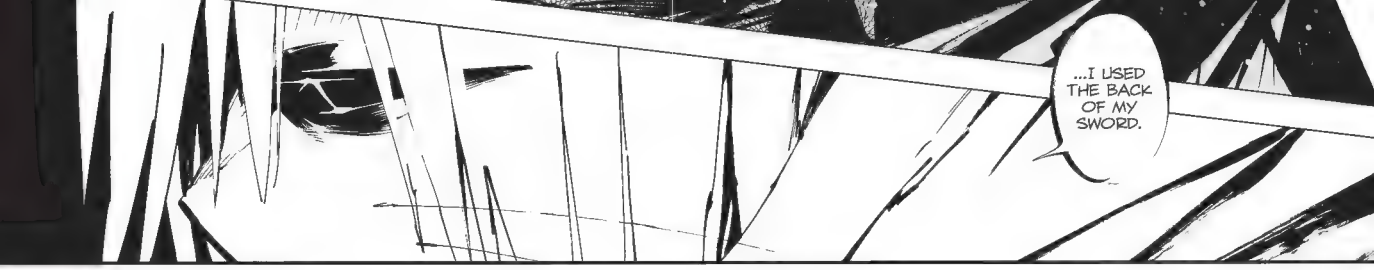
Okakatō, page 23

The name of Mukuro's secret weapon literally means "bonito flakes blade," where bonito is a type of fish—possibly one of Mukuro's favorites. Or perhaps she named her sword after the tasty treat because together, *okakatō* means "heel," as in "the heel of the foot."

Himemasu Castle, page 32

This castle bears a striking resemblance to the real life historical fortress, Himeji Castle, which was awarded by the shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu to his son-in-law for the latter's service in the battle of Sekigahara. The name Himemasu may be more palatable to the characters of *Nekogahara*, as it is the Japanese word for the sockeye salmon, and it is ruled by the Shakegawa, whose name means "salmon skin".

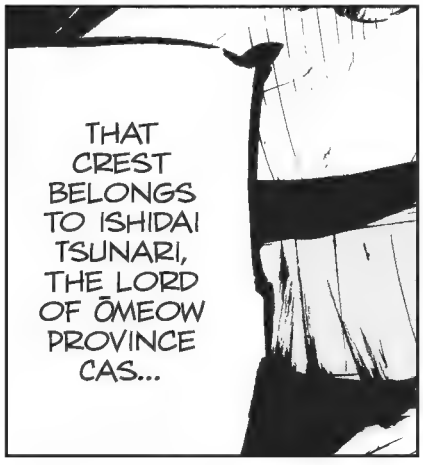




I used the back of my sword, page 90

The katana used by samurai is a single-edged sword, meaning it's sharp on one side and blunt on the other. Striking one's enemy with the blunt side of the blade is a way to teach them a lesson while letting them live to remember it.

Ishidai Tsunari, page 121



The name of the man Short is remembering will perhaps bring two things to the mind of a Japanese reader. The first is the striped beakfish, or *ishidai*. A few of these fish became famous for taking up residence in a ship that broke loose and went adrift after the Tohoku Earthquake and following tsunami in 2011, earning them the name "tsunami fish." The second thing Japanese readers will remember is the name Ishida Mitsunari, who was a military commander who fought, and lost, in the battle of Sekigahara.

Netherworld Soul-Reaper, page 129

The name of Short's special move is rife with wordplay. In Japanese, it is *jigoku no kama-otoshi*. The first part, *jigoku no*, is straightforward enough, meaning "of or relating to hell, the netherworld, etc." *Kama-otoshi* can mean "sickle drop," as in bringing a sickle down either to harvest grain or to strike an enemy. In Japan, a small sickle was often connected to a heavy weight via a chain, creating a weapon not entirely unlike Short's kendama. *Kama* is also the word for the

head of a fish, and *kama-otoshi* is the removal of the fish's head in preparation for cooking, hence the alternate spelling for this attack name: Netherworld Sole-Reaper.

Nobunyaga's Ambition, page 156

Nobunyaga's Ambition is a spinoff of the *Nobunaga's Ambition* game series, in which all the characters—who are real Japanese historical figures—are reimagined as cats. It's a social game that can be played on mobile devices, and for a time was available in North America as *Samurai Cats*. The game had a collaboration with this manga series, in which players could obtain in-game items featuring artwork by Hiroyuki Takei.

Success story in the making, page 160

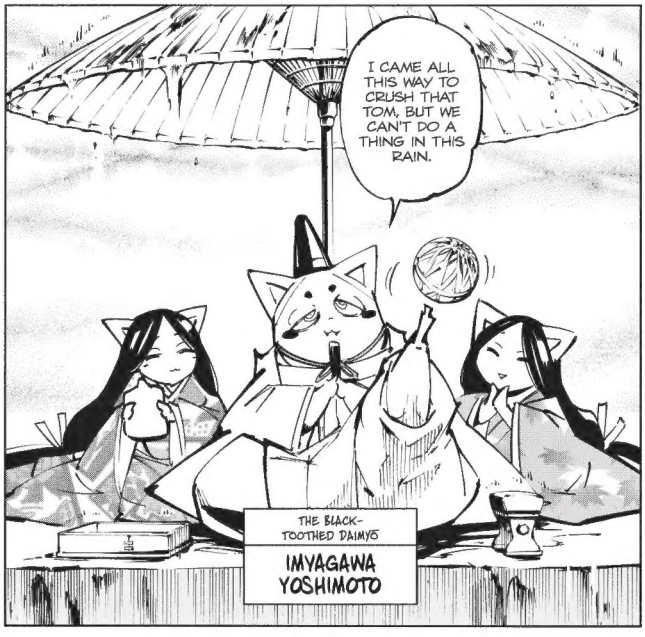
A SUCCESS STORY IN THE MAKING, FOOT SOLDIER
KINOSHITA TŌKITTYRŌ
HERE— BECAUSE I WANTED TO GO UP IN THE WORLD!
AND NOW HERE I AM, MARCHING THROUGH THE POURING RAIN AFTER A FORCE THAT'S ALREADY

Kinoshita Tōkittyrō, known in human form as Kinoshita Tōkichirō, began his career as a lowly foot soldier, but eventually became the successor to Nobunaga himself and the second of Japan's unifiers, who put an end to the Warring States Period.

One realm under one cat, page 162

This is the feline version of one translation of Oda Nobunaga's historical slogan, *tenka fubu*, or "one realm under one sword." The slogan, which he used on his personal seal to sign all written correspondence, announced his intention to unify the nation, which up to that point had been in a state of constant civil war.

The Black-Toothed Daimyō, page 164



Imyagawa is seen here wearing the traditional dress of the nobles of his time, including the black lacquer over his teeth. Even though he was busy waging war, he still took the time to apply his makeup as a sign of his courtly sensibilities.

Nekogahara 2

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